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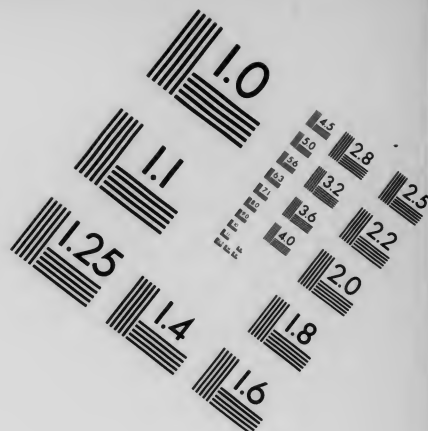
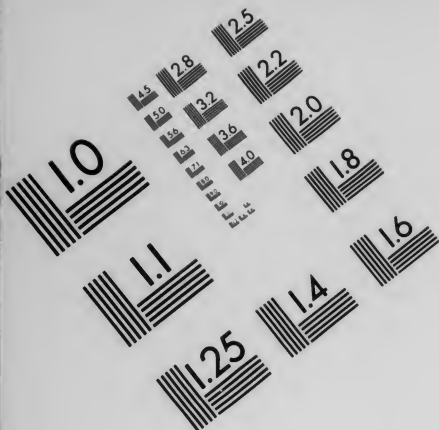


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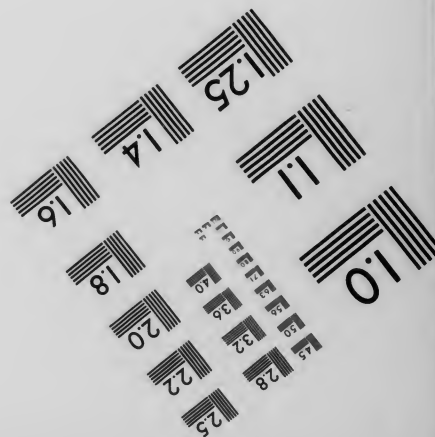
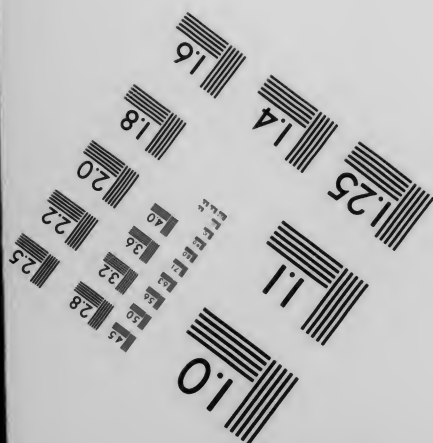
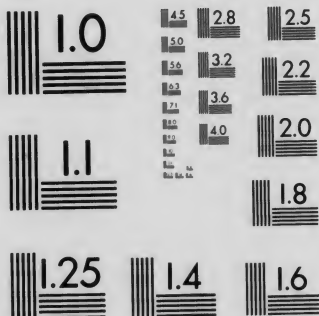
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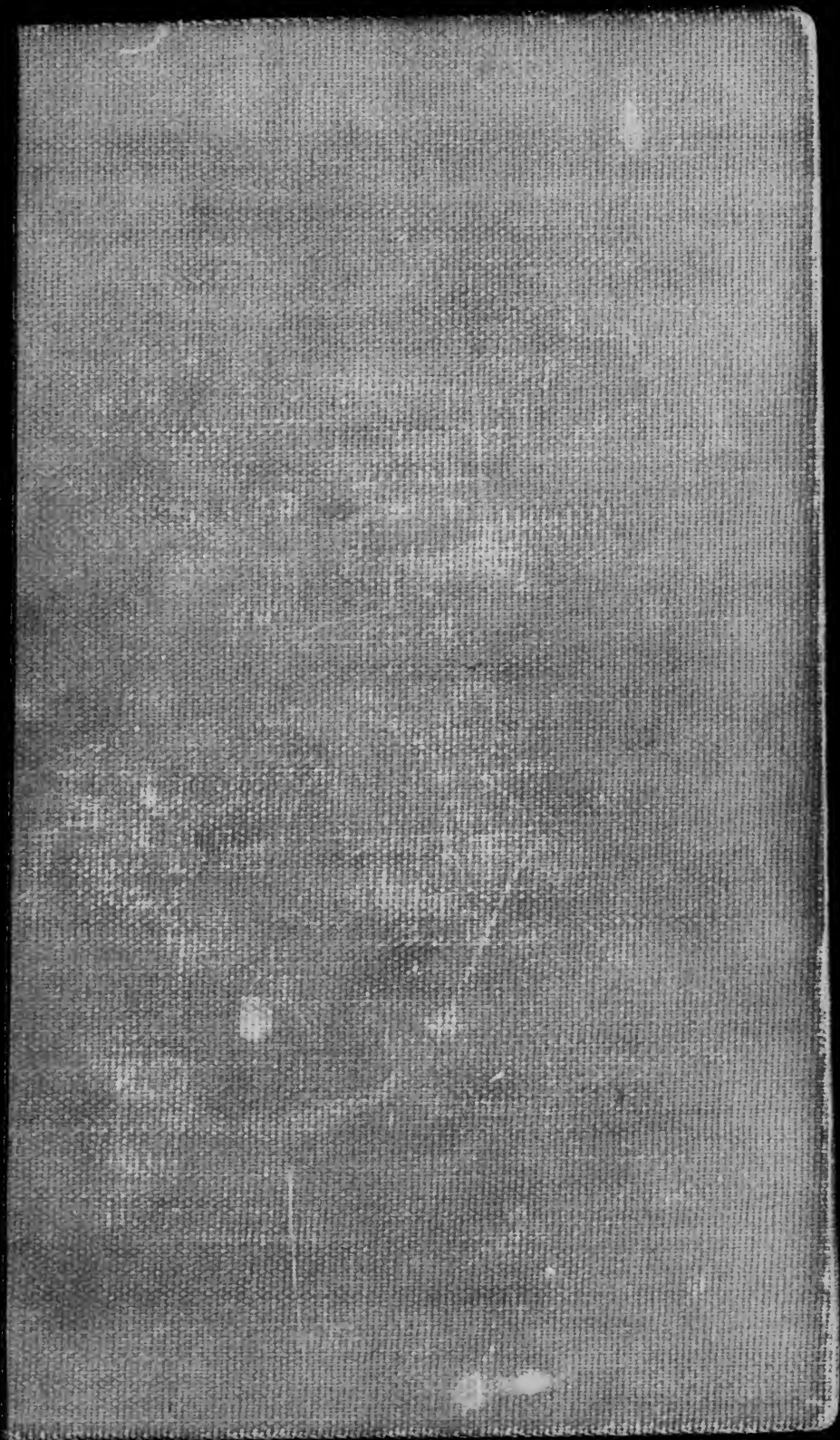
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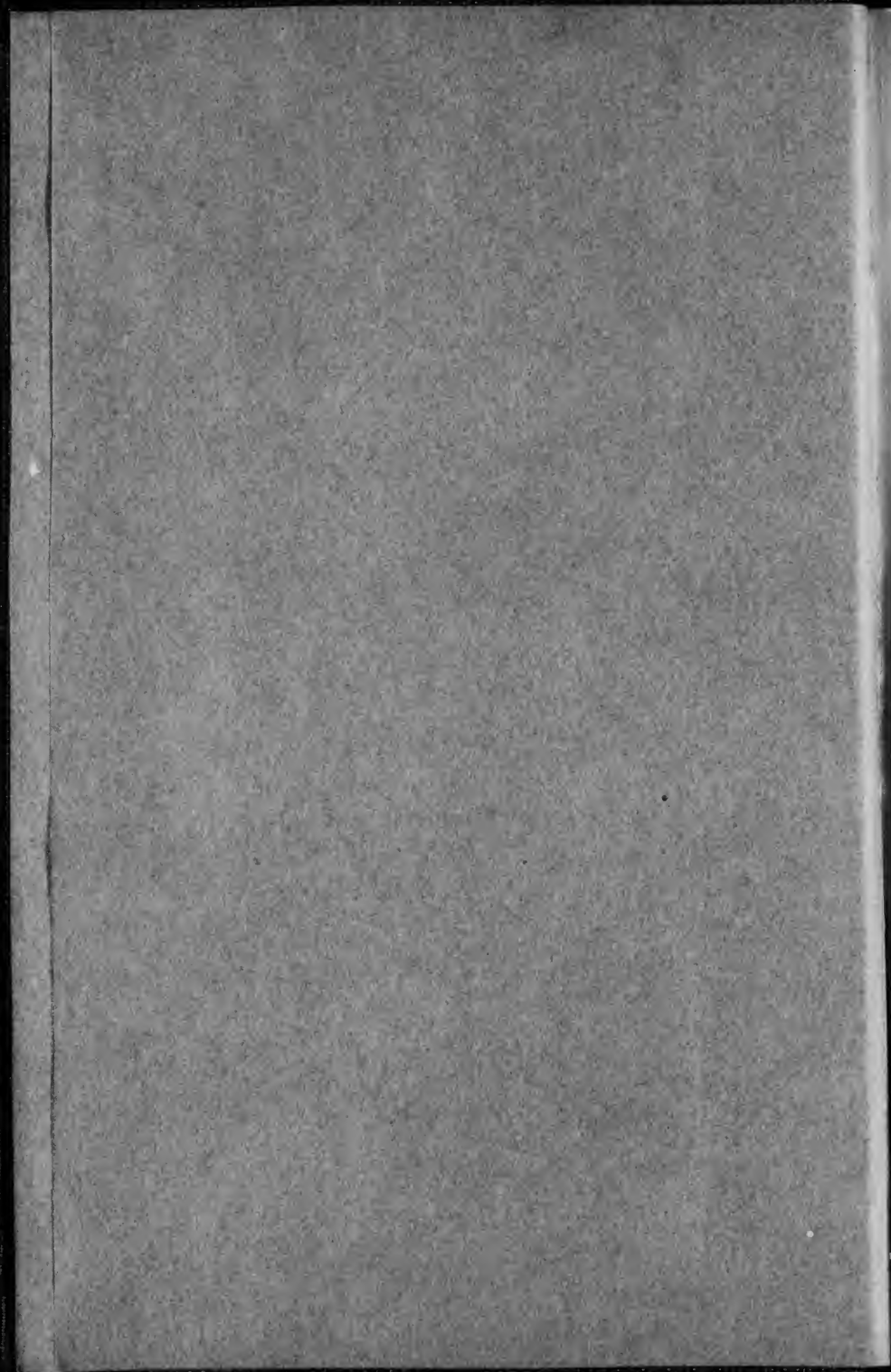
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JOHN DE WITT

VOL. I.

J^{an}OHⁿ, DE WITT 1625-72

GRAND PENSIONARY OF HOLLAND

OR

TWENTY YEARS OF A PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC

BY

Germain
M. ANTONIN LEFÈVRE-PONTALIS

TRANSLATED BY S. E. AND A. STEPHENSON *tr*

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO
1885

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TRANSLATORS' PREFACE.

THE TRANSLATORS believe that no apology is needed for offering to the English public the life of a man whose history is so intimately connected with that of the England of his day as was JOHN DE WITT's. They give it in all its details as related by M. Lefèvre Pontalis, omitting only the many footnotes relating to State papers and other documents which he has so laboriously searched in order to obtain a complete picture of the man and his surroundings. For those who wish to study the whole question in further detail, the notes in the original are useful; but a translation is not intended for the student so much as for the general reader, who will probably be gladly spared the trouble of constantly glancing at the foot of the page to notes which he has no opportunity or intention of verifying. The references to published works and manuscripts—Dutch, French, and English—are very numerous, and testify that no pains have been spared by the Author to secure accuracy in all points, great or small. The Translators have been careful to verify all quotations from English sources, and have in some instances corrected misapprehensions which occur in the original work with reference to English affairs.

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PREFACE.

CARDINAL TOURNON once asked Amyot why he took such pains to bring to life again the heroes of Plutarch. 'Because it is profitable,' replied he, 'to converse with the dead.' Among these illustrious dead, John de Witt holds a place. In him we find a man of worth greater than any mere statesmanship, and character higher even than his talents. He lived and died in the service of the cause he had made his own, that of the liberty of his country, which he never ceased to defend. Charged in his capacity of Grand Pensionary with the government of Holland for twenty years, from 1652 to 1672, he has left a name inseparable from the history of the seventeenth century. Abroad, his ministry secured to the republic of the United Provinces a place in the highest rank of European policy, by gaining it entrance into the circle of the great powers—France, England, and Spain. At home, John de Witt gave and maintained to the republican party victory over the friends of Orange during the minority of William III. The catastrophe of his tragical death recalls to us the violence of the popular reaction which restored the powers of the ancient stadtholders, and made the Prince of Orange the defender of the United Provinces against foreign invasion.

The history of John de Witt has already been the theme of a number of works, Dutch, German, and English, which cannot be passed over without mention. We have first that of Van der Hoeven,¹ which appeared in the eighteenth century, and which, although not drawn from the original sources, is nevertheless indispensable for reference. Herr Simons has added no new documents in his three volumes more recently published. Judging by the title he gave them of 'John de Witt and his Times,'² he appears to have intended to relate the general history of the republic, rather than the life of the Grand Pensionary. Quite lately Mr. Geddes³ has undertaken researches which leave nothing to be desired, but he has as yet published only one volume, which stops short at the first two years of De Witt's administration. In France until now, M. Mignet alone has touched lightly, but with a master's hand, upon this period of history, in some chapters of his justly celebrated work on the Negotiations relative to the Spanish succession. As to the minor publications which do credit to Dutch authorship, and which it would be sufficient to collect to gather the materials for a complete history, they are too numerous to be all referred to here; they will be found mentioned in the notes to these two volumes. It is impossible, however, to pass over the instructive commentaries which accompany M. Chair van Buren's edition of Wicquefort, or the many singularly learned notes of Messrs: Veegens and Schotel, or those articles, bearing the stamp of professorial

¹ Van der Hoeven, *Leven en Dood der Heeren Gebroeders J. en C. de Witt*. Amsterdam, 1705, translated into French and abridged. Utrecht, 1709.

² Simons, *Johann de Witt und seine Zeit*. Erfurt, 1835, 1836. The third volume was published in Dutch at Amsterdam in 1842.

³ Geddes, *History of the Administration of John de Witt*, vol. i., ending with the year 1654. The Hague, 1879.

authority, of Messrs. Vreede, Fruin, and many others, not omitting M. de Parien among Frenchmen.

Fresh researches and unpublished documents may confer some interest on the present work, which has been for many years in preparation with the aid of much valued assistance. It was composed in the Library and Archive Office at the Hague, thanks to the obliging help of the learned Director of the Royal Library, M. Campbell; of the Deputy-Keeper of the Archives, M. de Jonge, who was prematurely called from his work; and one of his most distinguished assistants, M. Haigman. It is by studying the public and private correspondence of the Grand Pensionary year by year, that his history can be most faithfully written.

Another source of information has been applied to with no less success, that of the family papers and records, freely communicated both by M. Hoeufft van Velsen and by Messrs. van Sypestyn, of whom only one now survives, but who both acquired for themselves honourable notoriety by their writings and researches. On this point no help could be more valuable than that obtained from the last lineal descendants of the Grand Pensionary, the venerable Madame Hoog and her son M. Hoog, whose important inherited collection has lately been in part acquired by the Royal Archives.

The collections at the Hague were supplemented by those of London and Paris, and notably by that at the French Foreign Office, whose inexhaustible treasures have been largely made use of. The author has had the good fortune to be able to add to these the archives of Chantilly, which were thrown open to him by the gracious kindness of Monseigneur the Duke d'Aumale, and which have enabled him to study in the correspondence of the great Condé the history

of the preparation and conduct of the war with Holland in 1672.

Something more than historical interest may be found in this work; political instruction may, perhaps, be gathered from it. During the laborious years of his ministry, John de Witt succeeded in the difficult task he had undertaken. In the end he succumbed to it. The success and the downfall of his labours are equally instructive. The services which he so gloriously rendered to his country are sufficient to prove that the prolonged duration of power, worthily exercised by a great minister, is the best guarantee for the liberty and prosperity of a republic. On the other hand, the public calamities, under the weight of which he succumbed, demonstrate with equal clearness that a nation, whose independence is menaced by conquest, cannot defend itself better than by placing itself under the guardianship of an ancient dynasty.

Boissy: *November 1883.*

LEFÈVRE PONTALIS.

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In the middle of the seventeenth century the Seven United Provinces had achieved the glorious and sanguinary conquest of their independence, and, detached from the Spanish monarchy, were constituted by the Union of Utrecht into a Republic, uniting in the bond of a confederation destined for

the common defence Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, Guelders, Overysse, Friesland, and Groningen. For many years the victim, of religious persecutions and political proscriptions, they had at last forced their ancient sovereigns, the kings of Spain, to acknowledge themselves vanquished by those whom, until now, they had treated as rebels. Mistress of herself, the Republic assumed as her emblem a lion amidst the waves, as a just homage to the indomitable valour of her people, with the proud motto, expressive both of her trials and her hopes: '*I struggle, but I overcome.*'

The nation which had thus freed itself, and had won the name of the Country of the Netherlands, had inherited as its birthright one dominant passion, the love of liberty. Descended from the most heroic of the German tribes, her ancestors were those Batavians and Frisians who opposed a constantly renewed hostility to the Roman dominion, and who, in the reign of Vespasian, had held in check the imperial legions. Her independence once regained, she had preserved it intact, and even Charlemagne had been forced to respect it. During the whole of the middle ages the men who in later times were to find a common country in the Republic of the United Provinces kept up an unceasing contest with their feudal superiors, to win from them the recognition of their rights.

On the accession of the House of Burgundy they entered upon a determined struggle for the maintenance of these rights. Associated as they were with the destinies of the Belgian Low Countries, and incorporated into the domains of Burgundy with the wealthy inhabitants of Brabant and Flanders, they offered energetic opposition to the arbitrary and tyrannical government which their new sovereigns claimed the right to exercise. So early as the fifteenth century they obtained from the Duchess Mary the Great Charter, or Great Privilege, which, by giving them deliberative assemblies for the voting of taxes, and town councils possessing municipal freedom, guaranteed their political liberty.

The Reformation in the sixteenth century put in peril these acquired benefits and soon provoked the implacable furies

of religious tyranny. The Low Countries were transformed into a blood-stained arena, and Charles V., impatient to crush the rising revolt of conscience, gave the first and as yet feeble signal for persecution. Some victims had already been made when he was succeeded by his son, Philip II. On taking possession of the inheritance of his fathers, Philip assumed to himself the task of imposing upon his States unity of faith, and the will of one master; he determined utterly to crush both heresy and the power of the Assemblies, being resolved to endure no obstacle to his rule. After ten years of a reign which had not yet exhausted the loyal obedience of his subjects in the Low Countries, he replied to their remonstrances by addressing to his sister, the Regent Margaret of Parma, his definite resolution 'not to grant one of the alterations for which they petitioned, whether in matters of government or of religion.' He refused to convoke the States, that he might continue to levy taxes at his pleasure, and would not restrain the powers of the Inquisition, so that he might more surely count upon the extermination of heretics. When the letters of the King of Spain were read at Brussels in the Council, William, Prince of Orange, stadtholder or lieutenant of Philip II. in Holland and Zealand, left the hall, saying, 'Now we shall see the beginning of a great tragedy.' He was not mistaken. The tragedy was heroic in its action and lasted eighty years.

The first signal was given by the great lords of the country. One of the councillors of the Duchess of Parma having spoken of them as beggars (*gucux*), they proudly assumed the title which had been flung at them in scorn. At a banquet given in Brussels, at Cuylenburg House, one of their number, Brederode, the gayest of all present and a descendant of the ancient Counts of Holland, beckoned to his page, who handed to him a leathern wallet, such as beggars then carried, and a large wooden bowl, which also formed part of their usual equipment. Brederode took the wallet, filled the bowl with wine and emptied it at one draught, crying as he replaced it on the table, 'Long life to the Beggars!' And thus among a gathering of nobles excited by

wine, and met together for pleasure, there arose the cry which was soon to resound over land and sea and to create a free country.

The party of resistance seemed, however, to be in a desperate condition, and the brutal fury of the iconoclasts who were devastating the Catholic cathedrals could but hasten its destruction. Freedom was to be bought only at the cost of the martyrdom of a nation. Before two years were over, the Duke of Alva was sent into the Low Countries with an army of 10,000 picked veterans. When he had covered the country with scaffolds, with gibbets and stakes, sparing neither the most illustrious nor the most obscure victims, he believed that he had succeeded in his mission, and wrote to Philip II., amidst the cries of agony of a whole nation: 'There is no country in the world more easy than this to govern, if one knows how to rule it.' To rule was to massacre.

On February 16, 1568, by a decree of the Inquisition, all the inhabitants of the Low Countries were condemned to death as heretics. A few persons mentioned by name were alone excepted. Ten days later a royal proclamation confirmed the sentence of the Inquisition, and ordered that it should be put in force without distinction of sex, age, or rank. The lives of 3,000,000 human beings, men, women, and children, were disposed of thus at one stroke.

But an oppressed nation is like a great river checked in its course by the frosts of winter. So long as the sky is darkened and the sun shines with only a feeble light, you may cross it safely and trample it under foot as if it were paved with stone. But suddenly a sound is heard of cracking, both deep and dangerous, and the stream, awakened and revived by the beams of a spring day, parts asunder the blocks of ice which imprisoned it, breaks its fetters, and resumes its course with the irresistible impetus of recovered freedom.

Deliverance came, as it commonly does, from the quarter whence it had seemed impossible to look for it. Elizabeth of England, whose interest lay in conciliating Philip II., repulsed from her ports some refugees who had sought shelter there. Two hundred and fifty 'sea-beggars,' as they called them-

selves, under the command of the famous William de la Marck, put to sea, famished and anxious to re-victual their ships. Storm-tossed and repulsed from every shore, these men had no country but what they could make theirs by conquest. The tempest having stranded them at the mouth of the Meuse, they seized the fortress of Brill; and this city of refuge, occupied by outlaws, became the cradle of a new State destined one day to be the guardian of the balance of power in Europe.

The capture of Brill took place on April 1, 1572; the wealthy towns in the neighbourhood at once surrendered or were seized, and a week later Rotterdam declared itself independent. The cause was no longer that of a handful of desperate men, but the rising of a nation. The States of Holland assembled at Dordrecht, July 15, 1572, and appealed to William of Orange, while Guelders, Overijssel, Utrecht, and Friesland yielded simultaneously to the impulse of patriotic revolt. The arrival of a body of 15,000 French troops under the command of Coligny was already announced. But, instead of this expected succour, the defection of France, made still more sinister by the massacre of St. Bartholomew, annihilated the hopes of the Prince of Orange. Proof against discouragement, however, and full of courageous resignation, he wrote to his brother, John of Nassau, 'I am determined by God's grace to maintain myself in Holland and Zealand, and to make my grave there.'

From this moment the Spanish monarchy lost hold of its prey and never recovered it. The pecuniary exactions of the Duke of Alva added to the horror caused by his persecutions, and secured to the party of revolt the support of the small traders, besides uniting Catholics and Protestants against a common enemy. The latter exhausted itself in sieges, and weltered in the blood of whole provinces. But the siege of the town of Alkmaar, defended by 800 soldiers and 1,300 citizens, and the indomitable resistance of Leyden set bounds to the successes of Spain. The breaking down of the dykes, behind which a whole nation was gathered in arms, forced the Spaniards to retire under penalty of drowning. When the Duke of Alva, who boasted of having caused 18,000

persons to be executed during his government, returned to Spain in 1573, his successors found it impossible to undo the work of liberation.

They persisted in the struggle, but it was beyond their powers. The last victories which Spain succeeded in gaining,¹ remained barren, and when Philip II. in his discouragement decided to recall the Duke of Alva, the gulf which had been opened between the oppressors and the oppressed could no longer be closed. Requesens, notwithstanding his temporisings and his apparent moderation; Don John, the victor of Lepanto, in spite of the prestige of his fame, the seduction of his promises of pardon, and his successful feats of war; Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, with his military genius and great diplomatic abilities, all disappeared in a few years, like figures in a pageant. Four generations of soldiers were exhausted by them, and the Spanish dominion came to an end. The Union of Utrecht was formed in 1579 between the seven provinces which, having declared for the reformed doctrines of Calvin, had to guard both their religious and their political liberty. Two years later the rupture with Philip II., which until then had remained doubtful, was finally accomplished by the deposition of the King of Spain and the proclamation of a federal republic. Henceforth the successors of Charles V. were never again to bring under their yoke the subjects who had set themselves free; a new nation, which would neither die nor live as slaves, had sprung into life.

The whole seventeen provinces of the Low Countries, both Catholic and Protestant, drawn together by the wise tolerance of the Prince of Orange, had all but united in one independent State, notwithstanding the differences of religion. The pacification of Ghent in 1576 seemed to have joined them in one league; but the skilful negotiations of the Duke of Parma reconciled to Spain the Walloon provinces, Artois and Hainault, while at the same time jealousies and internal discords destroyed the work that had been begun. The assassination of the Prince of Orange and the taking of Antwerp by the Duke of Parma

¹ At Mook, under Requesens; at Gembloux, under Don John.

were irreparable blows to the Union; and the hesitating policy of Henry III. of France, who could not make up his mind to accept the sovereignty of the Low Countries either for himself or for his brother the Duke of Anjou, the equivocal assistance given to the United Provinces by Queen Elizabeth, and the disorderly administration and arbitrary rule of her envoy, the Earl of Leicester, culminating in his audacious attempts at usurpation of power, all combined to restore the southern provinces of the Low Countries to the rule of their former masters.

Spain was none the less reduced to act on the defensive. The diversion attempted by Philip II. against England, followed by the destruction of the Invincible Armada and his intervention in the civil wars of France on the side of the League, diminished his forces in the Low Countries. He could no longer prevent the capture of fortresses of which he had until now retained possession, such as Nimeguen in 1590 and Groningen in 1594, by Maurice of Orange, the son of William I. The independence of the United Provinces was established beyond all danger by the alliance concluded with Henry IV., and renewed with Elizabeth in 1596, and the twelve years' truce from 1609 to 1620 would have ended all hostilities if it had not been the interest of France that they should be resumed in order that she might be secure of a powerful ally against Spain, with whom she was still at war.

During twenty-seven years after the termination of the truce, the possession of Brabant was disputed between Spain and the United Provinces in a series of sieges which shed lustre on the military science of Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange, and of the Spanish general Spinola, but which did not rekindle the former animosity between the belligerent parties. The battle of Rocroy brought this state of things to an end. Defeated and crushed by France at Rocroy in 1643, exhausted by the expenses of a war which in the last eighty years had cost her nearly eighty millions, fearing to lose the provinces which still remained to her, and finally relinquishing the hope of reconquering those she had lost, Spain was ready to demand peace at any price, and con-

sidered herself fortunate in disarming the United Provinces by recognising them in the treaty of Munster in 1648 as a free and sovereign State.

The little republic had vanquished the great empire. In all respects the victory was astonishing. On one side we have the Spanish monarchy, of which the Atlantic and Mediterranean alike seemed tributary waters, enjoying a favoured climate and fertile soil, boasting of splendid and populous towns—Madrid, Cadiz, Granada, Toledo, Valladolid, and the recently conquered Lisbon; mistress of Sicily, Lombardy, and Flanders; whose domains had been extended by Christopher Columbus to the confines of a new world of which the riches seemed inexhaustible; ruling a third part of the known world, so that the sun never set upon her dominions, and having at her disposal the greatest soldiers of the day, the finest infantry in Europe, the best equipped and most numerous fleet both mercantile and royal. On the other side, to support the burden of resistance to Spain, we see Holland, a little province half submerged in the sea, consisting in part of sands and marshes. It is not man here who has sprung from the earth, but the earth which has been created by man, formed by his labour, and conquered from the ocean by the formation of dykes, the enormous task of whose construction gives some measure of the laborious industry and the indefatigable vigilance of this people. The soil of Holland consists only of 100,000 acres of cultivable ground, which if sown with wheat would not yield more than a couple of pounds of bread for each inhabitant. Her population, which in less than half a century was to double itself, amounted to barely 1,240,000 souls at the beginning of the war of independence. She was governed almost entirely by traders and artisans, and could expect but little help from the other provinces with which she had made common cause. But she found in herself all that was needed; statesmen, captains, soldiers, a whole generation of citizens to whom no sacrifice was too great by which they might win and retain their liberty, and who transformed their land conquered from the sea into the rock against which the colossus of Spain was to be broken.

Amidst the fogs and marshes of this country of lagoons, the spectacle of the ancient resistance of Greece to the all-powerful monarchy of the Kings of Persia, and of the more recent struggle of Switzerland against the Archdukes of Austria and the Dukes of Burgundy, had thus been revived with similar determination and similar success. The United Provinces in their stand against the Kings of Spain had proved once more that the safety of a nation does not always depend upon the number of men it can muster in arms, but upon the courage with which it holds its own and the confidence it places in the goodness and justice of a great cause.

The little new-born republic soon took her place amongst the greatest States of Europe by means of the rapid development of her riches; and she deserved all that she gained. She turned to profit the weakness of the great kingdoms which, exhausted like Spain by the Continental wars and the divisions of a falling monarchy, enfeebled like France by the discords of the Fronde, or convulsed like England by the shock of a revolution, had no longer either trade or ships. She became the Phœnicia of modern days. Having possessed themselves of the Scheldt, the United Provinces could close the outlets of Antwerp, and thus inherit the commercial greatness of that wealthy city, which a Venetian ambassador of the fifteenth century had compared to Venice. They welcomed also into their principal towns the artisan population of the Low Countries, who fled from the tyranny which Spain attempted to exercise over their consciences. The woollen goods, the tapestries and embroideries of Groningen, Friesland, and Overijssel, became as much sought after as had been those of Tournay, Ypres, Brussels, and Valenciennes. The manufacture of cloth, linen, and stuffs, which gave employment to 600,000 of the inhabitants of Holland, opened new sources of labour and profit in the future to a people who had hitherto been content with the trade in cheese and salt fish. The fisheries had indeed already sufficed to enrich them. Nearly a fifth of the population of Holland lived upon the proceeds of fishing, particularly upon the herring-fishery.

Three hundred thousand barrels of salt fish were annually produced, returning to Holland alone more than 320,000*l.* The fisheries were more lucrative than the silver and gold mines discovered by Spain in the New World, and in popular parlance Amsterdam, the wealthiest city of the United Provinces, 'was built upon herrings.'

The maritime and commercial greatness of the republic developed rapidly. The mercantile marine of Holland alone mustered 10,000 sail and 168,000 sailors, and gave the means of livelihood to 260,000 souls. Thus was held in reserve a naval militia full of courage and confidence, and the peaceable dominion of the seas was secured to the United Provinces. They had monopolised the greater part of the trade of Europe, had added to it since the peace the entire transport of merchandise between America and Spain, had in their hands the service of the French ports, and maintained an import trade valued at thirty-six millions. In the northern countries, Brandenburg, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Muscovy, access to which was given by the Baltic to the United Provinces, they found an inexhaustible market for their exports; importing in return the products which they required—namely, wheat, wood, iron, copper, hemp, and furs. Thirty millions of capital were engaged in the Baltic carrying trade, and the total value of the goods shipped each year in Dutch vessels on all seas exceeded forty millions sterling. 'The Dutch,' according to the saying of a contemporary, 'had made themselves the common carriers of the world.'

It was by means of her colonies that the republic had been enabled to give so great a development to her maritime commerce. She had the monopoly of all Eastern products. The richest countries of Asia had become her purveyors, and furnished her with the provisions and spices with which she in turn supplied Europe to the value of 700,000*l.* or 800,000*l.* annually. The powerful East India Company, which was founded at Amsterdam in 1602 with a capital not exceeding six and a half millions of florins, had founded in Asia an empire composed of possessions conquered from the Portuguese. In 1650, being mistress of the Cape of Good

Hope and thus secure of a harbour for her ships, she reigned supreme at Ceylon and on the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel. She had founded a seat of government at Batavia, in the wealthy island of Java, and had extended her trade as far as China and Japan. Meanwhile the West India Company, whose fortunes were more rapid but less secure, had fitted out 800 vessels for war or trade, and had made use of them to appropriate the fragments remaining of the Portuguese dominions on the coast of Guinea and in Brazil, that 'land of gold and diamonds,' of which the greater part had been brought under her rule.

The republic of the United Provinces had thus become the general mart of exchange for all nations. 'Its inhabitants,' wrote a contemporary author, 'sucked honey, like the bee, from all parts. Norway has been called their forest; the banks of the Rhine, the Garonne, and the Dordogne, their vineyards; Germany, Spain, and Ireland, their grazing lands; Prussia and Poland their granaries; India and Arabia their gardens.' The various parts of the world seemed thus to be their tributaries.

Holland was the true sovereign of the Confederation. She had profited by her almost insular position on the shores of the ocean, at the mouths of great rivers, and sheltered at the extremity of a gulf, to take the first place amongst the seven confederated provinces. Amsterdam, called by a French ambassador 'the great bell of Holland,' lent money to sovereigns, and treated with them on equal terms; her bank, founded in 1609, had become as it were the metropolis of the trade of the world; her artisan population counted not less than 54,000 workers. The great city, with its streets intersected by vast docks bordered by spacious quays under the shelter of avenues of trees, its long lines of walls, its sumptuous edifices, its wealthy mansions with their flights of marble steps, its hospitals testifying to thoughtful humanity, caused some envy even to the subjects of Louis XIV.

To the beauty and riches of her other towns, the Hague, Dordrecht, Delft, Leyden, Haarlem, and Rotterdam, Holland added also the charms of a landscape enlivened by green

fields where numerous flocks and herds found pasture, crossed by canals which served for high roads, and dotted with wind-mills in constant movement, like 'a scene on the stage some twenty miles long.'¹ For decorations she had gardens of herbs and flowers, the cultivation of which was the favourite occupation of her inhabitants. The prosperity and comfort of the people, with the small number of really poor, who, by the abundance of work and the readiness of assistance, were spared the misery then so common, completed the holiday appearance of this republic of traders, who had been freed by war and enriched and made famous by the arts of peace.

Prosperity and freedom combined had been for the United Provinces the signal of a sudden blossoming of arts, science, and letters. Beside their almost legendary heroes, William the Silent, Count Egmont, Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde; beside their statesmen, their diplomatists, their great warriors, their captains and admirals, they found place for an illustrious group of painters, poets, and prose-writers. They could boast of having seen in the brief period of one half-century the birth and development of that great and prolific school of Dutch painters, worthy of being named as rivals to the great masters of Flanders, Germany, and Italy. These painters did not indeed strive after the ideal; the change of faith had closed to them the great source of religious inspiration by establishing in the United Provinces a form of worship without images. They paid no heed even to what was passing around them, and only as rare exceptions ever reproduced the great scenes of contemporary history. Nature and mankind were sufficient for their studies, and the Dutch school limited the work of art to the representation of these subjects, with all the fidelity and perfection of its drawing and all the wealth of its colouring. Nothing escapes it; landscape, cattle, shipping, seas and canals, streets, houses, booths, people of all conditions, from men of wealth and leisure to the humblest and most ill-favoured of fortune, municipalities with their banquets and their business, all live again on its canvas, the exact and speaking likeness of the country without the

¹ *Mémoire de Hollande*, p. 82, par Madame De La Fayette.

smallest attempt at embellishment. We have Paul Potter, who at twenty-three years of age painted his masterpiece, the famous Bull; Bakhuizen and Van de Velde, with their sea-pieces; Wouvermans, Hobbema, and the greatest of landscape painters, Ruysdael, who, painting by the light of his own sentiment, with natural and touching simplicity, has made use of the temperate and subdued rays of a northern sun to illuminate the sober scenes which he delineates, and to lend them a charm peculiar to himself. To these may be added the most admirable portrait painters: Netscher, Terburg, Metz, Mieris, Van der Helst, Franz Hals the most refined and life-like of all; besides Van Ostade and Jan Steen, the faithful and sometimes bold delineators of popular life in its minutest details; Gerard Dow, whose most homely pictures of interiors are finished to the highest point and even touched with pathos; Cuypp, whose works form a complete representation of Holland in the seventeenth century; and above them all, throned in solitary grandeur, Rembrandt, great thinker as well as great painter, whose life and works alike offer the contrast of bright lights and heavy shadows, and who can be compared to no other whether for greatness of inspiration or for originality of genius, being without a rival in his glory.

In the other domains of art all the faculties of the mind were equally on the alert. Vondel,¹ the reformer and almost creator of Dutch poetry, which owes to him its purity and marked simplicity, was the first dramatist of his country and deserved the name of the Dutch Corneille; Cats, statesman and poet, charmed his contemporaries by the facile verses in which unstudied elegance perhaps supplied the place of the true poetic inspiration. The revolution which had established the national independence found its historian in Hooft; and Wicquefort, afterwards to become historiographer to the States of Holland, was busy with his great work which he completed under persecution, and to which his learned volumes on the functions of an ambassador are a supplement. Grotius, equally renowned for his merits as a statesman and for his talents as a writer and juriconsult, called by one of his

¹ He died in 1679, aged 91 years.

contemporaries 'the man of most universal knowledge that the world has seen since Aristotle,' and who fell a victim to the resentment of the Stadtholder Maurice of Orange, was now being eagerly courted both by Sweden and France, and was to bequeath to posterity, in his treatise on the rights of peace and war, a complete code of the diplomacy of his time. Spinoza was there, staggered by no problem of philosophy, and himself putting forth the boldest speculations. Finally, Descartes, who had gone through the war of independence as a volunteer, gave to the United Provinces their highest literary distinction by settling himself there to complete his immortal works; it was in the shade of the woods at the Hague that he uttered the axiom of the new philosophy which in itself resumed the thought of the whole century: 'I think, therefore I am.'

Neither was Protestant theology inactive. Arminius and Gomar had renewed the controversy upon Grace and Free-will; the new doctors, Voetius and Cocceius, both chiefs of opposing sects, gathered round them numerous disciples. The Cartesian philosophy, defended by one party and attacked by the other, had divided them into two hostile camps.

The study of antiquity was awakening the taste for imitation of the Roman writers and poets. Barlaeus, Heinsius, Justus Lipsius, and Scaliger had opened new paths for learning. Isaac Vossius, who corresponded with St. Evremont, lived in familiar intercourse with Hebrew, Greek, and Latin literature; and new editions of Virgil and Horace did honour to the learning of Heinsius. At Amsterdam Louis Elzevir acquired a celebrity, which still endures, by the typographical perfection of the works which he sent out from his printing presses. At the same time a long course of military renown had caused the United Provinces to be considered as a school for the formation of soldiers and commanders. Many strangers came during the last campaigns of Frederick Henry to learn the art of siege and defence; and the study of strategy and the art of fortification gave scope to the talents of military engineers such as Ruze, and Cohorn the Vauban of Holland. The necessities of navigation encouraged the

study of geography, and the maps of the bookseller Jan Blaes, sheriff of Amsterdam, were sought for in all parts of Europe. Mathematical and natural sciences were not behindhand. Huyghens, one of the most learned men of the day, had won renown by his geometrical studies, his discoveries in mechanics, and his astronomical observations, to which Louis XIV. himself awarded formal recognition. Nature herself seemed to have opened her secrets to the penetration of Zwammerdam and Graaff. Zwammerdam applied the microscope to the observation of insects, that he might study their metamorphoses. Graaff made use of anatomy to establish the law of the development of germs and the mysteries of human generation. Inventors were not lacking either. A bell-founder named Hermong discovered a combination of metals which enabled him to cast bells with a tone as soft as that of an organ, so that people went to hear the chimes as they might have gone to listen to music. A Frenchman named Dessons, established at Rotterdam, exhibited there to the French ambassador, Chanut, a vessel with paddle-wheels which he had constructed to be sent to sea without sails, oars, or ropes, and which he boasted would make fifteen miles an hour. 'He had,' he said, 'preferred to try the experiment of it in a free country, which could appreciate this sort of work, rather than to attempt it in France, where the civil wars had destroyed the taste that would formerly have delighted in such curiosities.' It seems as if the discovery of steam was nearly anticipated by a century and a half.

Thus it will be seen that the republic of the United Provinces took an active part in the intellectual movement encouraged by the brilliant example of France, and followed it with ever-increasing emulation. In the universities of Leyden, Groningen, and Utrecht, renowned for the lectures of the most eminent professors, in the gymnasium of Amsterdam and the Latin school of Dordrecht, were collected many and serious students in the various branches of knowledge. The university, demanded and obtained by the town of Leyden in recompense for her defence against Spain, counted 2,000 students, and had in a very short time acquired European

celebrity. Twenty-two years after its foundation, Henry IV. of France, in his treaty of alliance with the United Provinces, declared, as a proof of his gratitude to the States-General for the aid they had given him against Spain, that all academic diplomas given by the professors of the university of Leyden should henceforth be accepted in France, and that the degrees of her graduates should also be recognised. At Dordrecht, literary assemblies formed a part of the every-day habits of society; young and beautiful women of cultivated minds and refined sentiments there met and distinguished themselves by their poetical essays and their more serious studies, as if to rival the most illustrious Frenchwomen of their day; and this distant reflection of the splendour which illumined the Hôtel Rambouillet gave a stamp of elegance to the society of a mercantile community which riches could never have bestowed.

Independent of external influences, and enjoying the benefits of a civilisation fertile in resources and fruitful of glory, the people of the United Provinces had remained faithful to those traditions of simplicity and virtue which make nations free or worthy to become so. 'Although they are far removed from the ancient parsimony of their fathers, they still retain some of that moderation which is so rarely to be found with wealth. Great frugality at table, a small number of servants, sobriety in dress and furniture, little ambition to raise themselves above the rank of traders, the unpaid character of most public offices, which are rather indemnified than salaried; finally, the spirit of the popular assemblies, which place on a comparative equality all who form part of them—all these things combine to keep together riches which would soon be squandered in the luxury of Courts, with the desire of advancement inseparable from those who live under a monarchy.' This testimony from the Marquis de Pomponne, ambassador from the King of France to the Hague, and one of the advisers of the war declared afterwards by Louis XIV. against the United Provinces, is that of a judge as competent as he was impartial.

Luxury, that evil accompaniment of wealth, had not yet

spoiled the old simplicity of manners. The people of the United Provinces avoided all appearance of splendour in the exterior of their houses, which, however, within were handsomely furnished and kept with the most scrupulous care. They treated their own persons as they did their houses, and took no part in the extravagances of French and English dress of that period, which only provoked their amazement. 'Everything is topsy-turvy in France,' we read in their accounts of travel; 'the women are like men and the men like women. The women are queens in their households, and rule everything. The men usurp the coquetry, the elegance and splendour of dress of the women. The latter take pains to look pale, and all seem to have the ague; to improve their appearance, they wear patches and powder on their cheeks. They sprinkle their hair with flour, which makes their heads white, and surround themselves with hoops from casks, which they call *vertugadins*, and which give them a very dignified appearance. The men even in frosty weather appear in their shirt-sleeves, with chests uncovered, their cuffs hanging below their sleeves; they are always booted and spurred as if for riding, and for the rest of their dress are generally in red like cardinals.'¹ 'They wear round their legs hoops, which they call "canons," as if to caricature the women who wear them round their persons, and these are made so horribly and monstrously large that the wearers are quite hampered and unable to walk straight. The rest of their clothes are of such a mixture of colours that they look like artists' palettes; they cover them with lace and costly embroideries, and wear plumes as long as a fox's brush, and on their heads a second artificial head, which is called a wig. Such is the dress that I must wear to be in the fashion here, where everything is exaggerated, according to French taste.'²

As to English society, the French ambassador in London a few years later, in the reign of Charles II., giving, in one of his despatches, an account of the scenes which pass before

¹ A contemporary letter on the French fashions in 1603, published by Monsieur Schotel, *Oud Hollandsch Huisgezin der seventiende Eeuw*, 1868.

² *Diary of a Journey*, Paris, 1657-58, published by M. Faugère, 1832.

him, writes what would certainly shock the modern English-woman, 'If I had the means of living in this country, I could amuse myself here better than some people. The ladies of the Court do not displease me at all. I can no longer endure Madame Desbordes' shoes; there are none so neat as the English, fitting the foot well, with very neat silk stockings and short petticoats. The Englishwomen are not at all shy of showing their legs, and I have often seen some worthy of being painted. Green silk stockings are the fashion, and black velvet garters are worn fastened below the knee with diamond buckles; where the silk stocking is wanting, the skin is white and smooth as satin.' The inhabitants of the United Provinces did not allow themselves to be carried away by the taste for frivolous expense of which the subjects of Louis XIV., and afterwards of Charles II., set them the example. At the beginning of the seventeenth century there were no coaches to be seen excepting at the Hague and one at Amsterdam. In 1610 the first coach was seen at Dordrecht.¹ By an edict of the city of Amsterdam, which still remained in force, it was forbidden to a bridegroom to present his wife with jewels of a value exceeding the twentieth part of his fortune.² A clergyman with a salary of 500 florins was content to supply his wardrobe with a coat once in two years and a cloak once in ten.³ The chief personages of the State preserved faithfully their old habits of economy. Some young Dutchmen visiting Paris relate that at their reception by the ambassador of the States-General 'they were regaled after the Dutch fashion, with beer, cheese, and butter, all served in china dishes and very suggestive of Amsterdam.'

Amongst other witnesses, the French writers Gourville and Saint-Evremond bear testimony to the primitive condition in which Dutch customs remained. 'M. de Lionne having asked me why the Dutch are so wealthy,' writes Gourville, who had long lived away from France after the fall of Fouquet, 'I told him that this was the result of their

¹ Schotel, *Oude Zeden en gebruiken in Nederland*, 1859, p. 26.

² Veegens, *Notice sur Wendela Bicker*.

³ Schotel, *Oude Zeden, &c.*, p. 75.

commerce, and still more of their economy. I informed him that in good houses meat was hardly ever eaten; at the most it was only smoked beef, lightly scraped and spread upon slices of bread and butter, and that everybody as a rule drank beer.' Saint-Evremond, when obliged during his exile to leave England and return to Holland on account of his health, complained bitterly as a man of pleasure of the dulness of his stay in the United Provinces. 'I had still,' he writes, 'five or six years in which to enjoy music, the theatre, and good cheer, and now I must content myself with orderly living and frugal fare, and get what poor amusement I can from a contemplation of Dutch virtue.' All entertainments, however, were not unknown. Balls, which in Paris were often deserted in favour of gaming, were frequent in the society of the Hague; but they were never made an occasion for show, and were simply meetings for pleasure with no attraction of intrigue. The most frequent entertainments were those given by the Corporations. The ward banquets, of which some curious reports have been preserved, lasted for several days, and were the occasion of various amusements. They were enlivened by music and shows, and so far was any idea of excess at table from these assemblies, that every young man was bound, under penalty of a fine, to bring with him some young woman, and wives and children came with their husbands and fathers. While the men smoked, the women drank tea, which a contemporary narrative calls 'the ladies' pipe.'

In this school of manners conjugal fidelity was preserved, and domestic scandals so frequent elsewhere were avoided. The Dutchwomen were remarkable for their beauty and the vigour of their constitutions. Accustomed from childhood to the greatest freedom, they had acquired more open and unre-served manners than the women of other countries, while at the same time their conduct was irreproachable. The young girls were left free to please themselves in their marriage engagements, and, once married, they contented themselves with the authority left to them in their own houses, and had no desire for anything beyond their domestic attach-

ments. 'It is not that there are not some very charming ones amongst them,' writes Saint-Evremont again, with the licentious recklessness habitual to him, 'but there is nothing to hope from them, be it from prudence or from a coldness which serves them as a safeguard. Whatever the cause may be, there is a certain habitual prudence universally established here, and a sort of ancient tradition of continence which is handed down from mother to daughter almost like a religion.'

In the matter of the education of children, paternal authority and solicitude were alike noteworthy. A father writes to his son: 'When you write to me, you should sign, "Your most dutiful son and very humble servant," for it is always proper to humble yourself before your parents.' This severe etiquette, which extended to the most intimate relations and caused even brothers to write to each other as 'Sir,' made the fathers of families especially careful of their duties. In those burgher families which handed down from one generation to another as a duty and an honour the guidance of public affairs, the parents had an interest in preparing the future of those who were to succeed to their offices, and they accordingly superintended the education of their sons with most vigilant care, supplying the want of fortune, if needful, by the sacrifices which they imposed upon themselves with that object. They brought them up to love work, and spared them neither good example nor good advice. The letters written to his son by the father of a young man destined to play a great part in the affairs of his country, Jerome de Beverningh, are a model of the domestic correspondence of the day. 'I wish you,' he wrote, when his son was only sixteen, 'to lose not the smallest particle of time, for, in order that you should become at all a distinguished man, nothing is more necessary to consider than the careful disposal of your days. I am constantly occupied about you and your studies, and I could wish that your application in reading and re-reading the best authors were equal to my care. The more you know, the more you will wish to know; it is only after having read a good author two, three, or even four times, that you can completely appreciate his charm. If you rule your

conduct according to my directions in this letter, and I hear a good report of you accordingly, my affection for you will be increased, and I will let you want for nothing which can be of service to you, as your good father.'

He desired him to be in no haste to leave the Latin school for the university of Leyden. 'You may take it as an incontrovertible fact,' he writes to him, 'that the more advanced studies afford no knowledge to those who have not already worked hard, and who do not begin by learning to walk before they attempt to run. You must not be one of those of whom the professors say: *Accipiamus pecuniam et admittamus asinum*. Besides, living is dear at Leyden, and whatever I set apart for your expenses I must economise at the cost of your sisters, which I would not do did I not expect a great deal from you.' The height of the paternal ambition betrays itself in another letter written for the encouragement of the young scholar, on a day when he had to deliver an oration before his masters and fellow-students. 'I hope,' writes the father, 'that you will acquit yourself creditably; spare neither pains nor labour. Keep in mind that I shall know what ability you have shown under the circumstances, and remember how agreeable to me it will be that you should receive praise. Consider that this is your first public action. Who knows for what ends the Lord may have decreed your birth?' Happy are those who have had such gentle and loving counsel from the good advisers of their life; still happier those who, like the young man to whom these letters were addressed, have known how to profit by it!

The family feeling, which attained almost to the height of a religious sentiment, was encouraged by the habits of a sedentary life. In one of the pictures of the day two women are sitting together; the old mother is listening while the younger one reads the Bible, and between them is an infant asleep in its cradle. The father is absent, but you see his place kept for him by the hearth, and his return is expected as a matter of course. Looking at these walls, so simply and unpretendingly decorated, and lighted by the blazing hearth, one may surely say: Happiness is here.

The liberties enjoyed by the United Provinces contributed no less than their domestic habits to the felicity of the people. Religious beliefs were not troubled by the oppressive Protestant rule which, alike under Cromwell's republic and after the restoration of Charles II., ceased not to prevail in England. Neither the war with Spain nor the recollection of the persecutions exercised by Philip II. had hindered the founder of their independence, William I., from respecting the rights of Catholics. Notwithstanding the intolerant fanaticism of the principal sectaries of the reformed religion, he had steadily pursued his object of religious liberty. Having himself changed from an almost indifferent Catholic to a fervent Protestant, he was determined not to allow his former co-religionists to be disturbed in their beliefs.

The requirements of Protestant orthodoxy, however, were still asserted in an imperious and vexatious fashion. Thus, the Grand Pensionary, De Witt, was commissioned by the States-General to call to account the envoy of the republic in Poland for his presence at some Catholic ceremonies which had accompanied the coronation of the Queen, and at the mass which was supposed to have been celebrated. He did not conceal from him 'the displeasure that would be felt by the States should they learn that he had taken part by kneeling or uncovering his head, or by giving any mark of respect, at the risk of causing scandal to those of the reformed religion in this country.' Religious toleration, of which the French Government, still faithful to the promises of the Edict of Nantes, set the praiseworthy example, left much to be desired in the United Provinces. While there might be seen in France five Protestant Marshals—viz. La Force, Châtillon, Gassion, Rantzau, and Turenne—the Catholics of the United Provinces were excluded from all public offices, even from municipal functions. The free exercise of their own form of worship even was subjected to numerous restrictions. They might not have any bishops, and for churches were forced to content themselves with private houses, undistinguished by any external sign, some of which remain to this day. If they had mass celebrated in their own houses, as the ambassadors

of the Catholic Powers were used to do, they might not admit any persons not belonging to their household.

It is true that the ordinances to be found in the register were seldom put in execution. 'In the larger towns of Holland, with the exception of Leyden,' writes the French ambassador, Chanut, 'mass is openly said, and the authorities wink at it, for payment of a small subsidy.' At Amsterdam, the magistrates of the town restored a church to the Catholics, who were numerous¹ there, thus recognising the open exercise of their religion; and Louis XIV., to whose intercession this satisfaction had been accorded, thanked in consequence 'his very dear and good friends the magistrates of Amsterdam.' The States of Holland, more tolerant than those of the other provinces, seemed disposed even to employ Catholics in their service, and would have been ready to say of those who served them what was said afterwards of himself by Count Tilly, when an officer in their army. 'If the heart is Papist the sword is Protestant.' 'The Catholics in these provinces,' writes again a French ambassador, 'have never enjoyed so much liberty, and I exhort them, so far as it is in my power, to use it with discretion and self-control, that they may preserve it.' As to the Jews, their active share in the commerce of the country, which made their services appreciated, protected them against all ill-usage; far from being harassed, they were allowed free use of their synagogues. Although there was but one dominant religion in the republic—namely, the Calvinistic, whose churches were supported, clergy paid, and their expenses assured by the State, religious liberty was thus becoming acclimated on the soil of the United Provinces, and was firmly striking root there. Respect for the rights of conscience might not have sufficed to secure its recognition, but it was protected by reason of public utility. 'No better method exists,' so we are told in an important document of the time, 'to attract the natives of all countries to come and establish themselves in Holland, than to leave them free to exercise their own religion.'

Religious belief had rather gained than lost by this liberty, which allowed churches, chapels, meeting-houses, and syna-

¹ De Thou, the French ambassador, estimates the number at 30,000.

gouges to exist peacefully side by side. As against the brilliant expansion of the Catholic religion, which appeared in France full of life, rich in good works and ruler of all even the most worldly hearts, the austere discipline of Calvinism had in the United Provinces set its seal upon the education of men's souls. They were marked by a religious faith, tempered by the still recent trials of persecution, which strengthened the conscience by the ever-present thought of God and of eternity, and which, however insufficient it might be, was yet a fruitful source of their attachment to domestic duties, as well as of their fidelity to the obligations of public life. One of the sisters of the Grand Pensionary de Witt wrote to her nephew after a great naval battle: 'A common sailor said to us, "We fought indeed, but God gave the victory, and we thank this fatherly Providence for our preservation." We were surprised to hear a rough man like this speak in so pious a fashion, but a lieutenant told us that piety was very general in all the fleet, and related to us that during the battle, whenever the sailors had a moment's rest, they knelt down to ask the blessing of God.' Religious sentiment, it will be thus seen, retained its wholesome and practical influence upon these maritime populations.

The liberty of the press had taken a firmer hold than religious freedom in the public estimation. Its very cradle was in the United Provinces, where the first newspapers belonging to private proprietors had been published, very different from those issued by the Governments themselves, such as the 'Gazette de France' in France. The most noted were the 'Dutch Mercury,' the 'Amsterdam Gazette,' the 'Extraordinary News' of Leyden, the 'Gazettes' of the Hague and Rotterdam, and the 'Haarlem Gazette,' whose editor, Abraham Casteleyn, had a European reputation. They were printed in medium form in two columns, at first once a week, then twice, and later three times a week, and gave news from all countries, which was supplied to them by highly paid correspondents. They were not originally intended to be in any way controversial, and aimed merely at gratifying public curiosity, but none the less were they full of startling and exciting revelations and reports of

State matters, without fear of offence or indiscretion. They made known, in a few lines of announcement, projects of war or treaty, revealed diplomatic mysteries, lifted the veil from Court intrigues, and denounced public abuses, thus, under very modest appearances, laying the foundation of that precious guarantee of publicity, which has sometimes been disgraced by shameful excesses, but without which there can be no free people.¹ 'The Gazette,' says Bayle, 'is the vehicle for all the evil-speaking of Europe, and it is a common threat to say, "I will expose you in the 'Dutch Gazette.'"' Already it had become a power which recognised no frontiers. 'At Constantinople, at Smyrna, at Cairo, in the Levant, and in both the Indies,' writes a contemporary, 'the Dutch newspapers are read as much as at the Hague or in the Amsterdam coffee-houses.' 'Republics,' he continues, 'are more favourable to this sort of business than monarchies, where apparently reasons of State demand that there should be but one will and one newspaper.' The diplomatic correspondence of the time accordingly show us the frequent complaints of the French Government, which could not tolerate the audacious indiscretions of the Dutch gazetteers and pamphleteers, and was perpetually demanding that they should not be permitted with impunity to trifle with the reputation of sovereigns. 'Make inquiries privately,' writes Louis XIV. to d'Estrades, 'as to who is a certain Italian, a Genoese by birth, living at Amsterdam, who busies himself with distributing news-letters in manuscript, most impudently concocted, concerning the state of my affairs and my future projects, and if you discover anything about him, let me know before you do anything to keep in check this worthy man's insolence.' The ambassadors of Louis XIV. could only reply that in a republic the liberty of speech and writing was not repressed as it was in a monarchy, and represented to him that he must put up with it. 'They would forego anything here,' writes one of them, 'rather than newspapers, which are the principal freight of their boats and waggons.'

Pamphlets were even more numerous than newspapers.

¹ See *Les Gazettes de Hollande et la presse clandestine au 17^{me} et au 18^{me} siècle*, Hatin. 1873.

In the voluminous collections in which they have been preserved for us, such as the 'Duncaniana Collection,' may be seen the immense number and variety of these almost daily publications, which form a living witness to the often feverish activity of the political literature of the day. This liberty was sometimes checked by the intermittent severities provoked by diplomatic demands, by the necessities of the public peace, or the duty of repressing the virulence of calumny. But it was none the less exercised with a boldness which judged men and things indifferently. 'There is no penalty here,' wrote a French ambassador, 'for those who create a bad feeling against the Government.'

The Constitution of the republic lent itself to this publicity. There was no danger to liberty of the press in the United Provinces, from the power of prince or assembly; it depended almost entirely on the municipal authority, under whose shelter it had been born and nurtured. It satisfied the love of discussion of public affairs which all the populace shared. 'As everyone can easily be acquainted with them,' we find written in an unpublished contemporary memoir, 'seeing that they are transacted almost under the eyes of all, people inquire and compare each other's opinions upon them, and, if they have any talent, they insensibly learn a good deal about politics. Thus in this country judgment and reflection are more developed than elsewhere. Ordinary money-changers converse about the government of the State as they would about their own private business, with such thorough comprehension of the state of affairs that one might suppose they were Government officials.' The United Provinces had become a nation of citizens capable of self-government.

This freedom simplified the exercise of government. The just protection given to all interests, public and private, added to the wide distribution of wealth, and the extent of their commercial resources, enabled the subjects of the republic to support the burden of taxation without feeling its weight too oppressively. The common revenue amounted in ordinary seasons to about twenty-five millions of florins, of which Holland alone collected twelve or fourteen millions. Each

province had to furnish its quota towards the common expenses, which comprised those of the army and the fleet, the ambassadors, and the interest on the federal debt, valued at thirteen millions. It had besides to provide for the expenses which fell to its private share, and a large proportion of which consisted of the payment of provincial debts, which had helped to supply the funds for the war against Spain. Many imposts had been established, and Holland, which supported the greater part of the expenses of the confederation, had multiplied taxes of all kinds, direct and indirect. 'The people cannot warm themselves, can neither eat nor drink, without paying something to the State,' writes a contemporary. The duties upon provisions were such that a dish of fish paid no less than thirty different duties. The most necessary commodities, wheat, flour, and salt, were subject to dues. The produce of the taxes upon provisions was seven millions. Bargains and all business transactions alike were heavily taxed. Succession duty was not less than five per cent. Land paid twenty per cent. on leases, and houses twelve and a half per cent. on their rent. In war time, income-tax, hearth-tax, and a tax on horses and carriages, besides a surtax of one-fourth on travelling fares, provided the extraordinary resources. Notwithstanding the burden of such taxation, the dues were paid without difficulty. It was said that there was no country in the world where the inhabitants were so highly taxed and so well to do. The United Provinces never knew the sufferings which made excise and custom dues and all forms of taxation so detested by the ratepayers in France towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV. 'As taxes are borne equally by great and small,' writes Pomponne in his memoirs, 'as there is no exception made in favour of rank or dignity, and the plenty produced by commerce gives occupation and profit to everyone, the populace contributes willingly to what it considers needful for its liberty and welfare.'

Equality as well as liberty was an instrument of government. The monopoly of power might be in the hands of a few families, but the governing class, consisting of the magistrates of towns, possessed no caste privileges. It enjoyed no

exemption from taxation, and contributed more than any other to the expenses of the Commonwealth. It was careful also to avoid any parade of superiority, gave no occasion for offence by pomp or insolence, and desired to escape notice as much as most people desired to receive it. 'The magistrates here labour for the safety of the inhabitants of the towns, with no expectation of gratitude or reverence, even for services rendered. They are frugal in the expenditure of public moneys, severe in the execution of the laws, haughty in their country's interest towards foreign nations, but at the same time peaceable and not easily offended with their fellow-citizens, and courteous to all sorts of private persons.' The homeliness of their manners made them popular, and the report of a civic banquet mentions amongst those seated at the table of the burghers of the ward not only magistrates of the city, but also the first Minister of the republic, De Witt, and the young Prince of Orange. Authority was exercised without distinction of rank, and so was found easily endurable.

These habits of social life, while they brought all conditions of people together, softened the asperities of democratic rudeness, which was seldom allowed full course. They could not, it is true, prevent the inevitable mixture of vice and virtue, and notably left free access to corruption, which, notwithstanding some memorable examples of integrity, often found an opening. In spite of all the precautions taken, gifts of money, which the donors called 'marks of politeness,' were a sure means for foreign ambassadors to gain credit. Promises of employment were equally in use to obtain votes necessary to the success of certain deliberations, and were useful aids to persuasion. However this might be, the watchful supervision of public opinion prevented or detected most abuses, and if the Government sometimes turned the exercise of power to its own profit, at least it could not use it to the damage of any other person. 'It is pleasant,' wrote a French exile at the Hague, 'to live in a country where the laws protect you from the arbitrary will of men, and where to live perfectly secure you have only to be secure of yourself.'

The constitution of the United Provinces had since the

fourteenth century encouraged these tastes and traditions of popular liberty and civic authority. The government created by it was a confederation of provinces represented by the States-General, and each province, represented by its provincial States, was little more than a confederation of towns. The distinction of orders, which in France constituted the fundamental maxim of the public law of the ancient monarchy, was, so to say, only fictitious in the organisation of the republic. In consequence of the change of religion, the clergy had ceased to form a body in the State, and the apparent power which they retained in the province of Utrecht alone had passed into lay hands; the canons of Utrecht, who were divided into five chapters, were merely proprietors of ecclesiastical estates, who sent eight deputies from their body to the States of their province. The nobles, or equestrian order, who represented the rural population, and who included all those who had the right of administering justice on their own estates, had no preponderance of power. In Guelders only, the most aristocratic of all the provinces, did they share with the deputies of the towns in the exercise of political power. Everywhere else, and especially in Holland, they took only a very subordinate part, and had but a single voice in the assemblies. In Groningen and Friesland, indeed, they were even confounded with all landed proprietors, without distinction of birth. The citizens of the towns, enriched by trade, had the upper hand almost everywhere; they reigned supreme in the councils or senates of the towns called magistracies, from which, except in Guelders, the nobles were excluded.

The town councils in some provinces, in Overijssel, in Groningen, and in the capital of Zealand, Middleburgh, were chosen more or less generally by the votes of the inhabitants. Elsewhere, in Utrecht and Holland, they were self-elected, sometimes with the aid of a small number of privileged electors,¹ and those who belonged to them enjoyed a pension

¹ At Dordrecht, the oldest town in Holland, and the birthplace of John de Witt, according to the municipal organisation which lasted until 1650, these electors were the eight delegates of the Corporations and the forty delegates chosen from a list of a hundred notables.

for life. The numbers composing them were according to the importance of the towns. The Council of Amsterdam was composed of thirty-six members, and that of Utrecht, which had a share in the government of the province, consisted of forty. Generally there were about twenty members. They delegated for terms of from one to three years the executive power and the administration of the finances to governors, who were known as burgomasters. In Holland this civic magistracy was completed by other members of Council, called Sheriffs, who exercised judicial power in many, both civil and criminal cases—in Amsterdam by a Bailiff appointed by the Assembly of the States as chief of the police and of the public forces. The town councils and governors of Holland were assisted also by a Pensionary, whose office was to accompany the deputies of the Council to the assemblies of the States and to speak in their name. Each town, like each province, was a State in itself, joined to others, but retaining full possession of its own autonomy. The municipal power thus exercised served as a basis for the political constitution of the United Provinces, and helped to constantly recruit a civic oligarchy united by community of interests, accustomed to the handling of public affairs, jealous of their independence, and worthy of becoming the governing class of the nation. To bring together all these scattered elements of government and unite them in an association of seven provinces, each governed by its own Assembly, had been the work of the Union of Utrecht. The States-General, entrusted with the diplomatic and military interests of each province and assisted by a Council of State, formed the bond of confederation, but a bond which would hardly have sufficed had not the authority of the Princes of Orange drawn it closer and made it indissoluble.

The republic of the United Provinces, to whose successful Constitution a central power was necessary, had the good fortune of having in their midst a family of princes to whom they owed their independence. The Princes of Orange had been their liberators, but had never been allowed to become their masters. They had been invested with double authority,

military and civil, as commanders-in-chief of the naval and military forces, and as stadtholders. Entrusted by the States-General with the offices of Admiral and Captain-General, they held command in the army and in the fleet, and had the right sometimes of presentation, sometimes of appointment to military rank, a right rather controlled than shared¹ by the States. The office of Stadtholder, which depended upon each province, gave to the Princes of Orange the appointment of municipal magistrates, burgomasters, and sheriffs, of whom the town councils had only reserved to themselves the power of presentation. It carried besides the right of sitting in all the Assemblies. The Stadtholder was a member of the Council of State, a member of the States of Zealand in his capacity of premier noble and sole representative of the nobility in their province, a member of the States of Holland as chief of the whole nobility, and President of the Court of Justice common to Holland and Zealand. Finally, the office of Stadtholder gave the Princes of Orange power to intervene in any differences arising between the provinces. The more inevitable these differences were, in consequence of the necessity of a unanimous vote on the most important deliberations in the General Assembly, the more the frequent exercise of this right of arbitration had strengthened the authority and extended the prerogative of the stadtholders. It was no royalty, however, that they enjoyed. By making the office of Stadtholder elective by law, although hereditary in fact, the States had remained the sovereign power. Up to this time they had escaped the dangers of usurpation, but these dangers always remained to be feared. The prestige of birth of the Princes of Orange, the splendour of the services they had rendered to the national independence and the reformed religion, the vast territorial possessions which made

¹ The appointment of major-generals, lieutenant-generals, and admirals belonged to the States-General; the provincial States reserved to themselves the presentation of three candidates for the command of vacant companies of their contingent of the forces, excepting the foreign companies, which were the most numerous, and in which the appointments were left unreservedly to the Captain-General.

a part of Zealand dependent upon them, the prerogative of military command and of the first civil magistracy which had devolved upon them, seemed to leave open to them the road to supreme power. They had worthily acquired and retained intact as an inheritance the devotion of the army, the fidelity of the nobility, who were still powerful in Guelders and Overijssel, the gratitude of the Calvinist clergy, and the passionate attachment of the populace, who had no interest in maintaining a republican Government in which they had no direct share.

In considering themselves indispensable to the safety of the country, and in desiring to found a dynasty, the Princes of Orange might therefore look upon themselves as called upon to satisfy the general desire. The citizens alone were resolutely opposed to this transformation of their power. They desired not merely to defend their municipal and political liberties against all encroachment, but also to guard the interests of their commerce from the dangers of foreign war. Haters of oppression rather than lovers of liberty, they were bent upon maintaining the principles of a pacific and economical order of government. Whilst the Orange party found partisans in the States-General to whom the authority of the stadtholders seemed a safeguard to the federal power, the party of the burghers was supported by the States of Holland, which represented their policy. Thus, under disguised and modified forms, the struggle was kept up between Monarchists and Republicans. The two parties were face to face, with nearly equally balanced forces, and were destined more than once to come to blows. This almost incessant rivalry, which is the key to the internal history of the United Provinces, prepared for John de Witt the part he was to play and the fate which awaited him.

The deliverance of the United Provinces seemed as if it ought to secure a kingdom to the House of Orange. William I., who had been their liberator, was descended from a princely German family, that of Nassau, whose origin may be traced with certainty as far back as the eleventh century. His ancestors had, as Dukes of Guelders, exercised sovereign

rights in the Low Countries 400 years before the accession of the House of Burgundy, and had faithfully served the princes of that house. Engelbert II. was one of the lieutenants of Charles the Bold and of Maximilian; he left his possessions to his brother John, whose two sons, Henry and William of Nassau, divided the inheritance. William succeeded to the German lands and died young, leaving seven daughters and five sons. He was the father of William I., --the descendant of his second son, John the Old, now occupies the throne of the Netherlands.

Henry, the elder brother of William of Nassau, who had received for his share the family estates in Luxemburg, Brabant, Flanders, and Holland, was tutor to Charles V., of whom he became afterwards the confidant. His son, René of Nassau-Châlons, was heir by his mother Claude of Châlons to his uncle Philibert of Orange, and thus inherited the little principality of Orange, from which all his family took the historic name that it has ever since preserved. He had no children, and, dying at the Emperor's side in the trenches of Saint Dizier, left his great inheritance to his first cousin, William, who thus, at the age of eleven years, found himself heir to the wealth and power of his whole house.

He was educated at the court of Charles V., and, from the trust reposed in him by the Emperor and by Philip II., was early called to high commands and charged with important negotiations, and, being also Stadtholder of the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, he seemed destined to lead a life of leisure, taking part in numerous *fêtes*, and keeping open house in his splendid Nassau Palace at Brussels, where he displayed all the luxury of a splendid hospitality. He was thus naturally placed at the head of the Netherlands nobility, and it was from his castle at Breda that he published the declaration known by the name of the Compromise of the Nobles, which has deserved the name of the *Serment du Jeu de Paume* of the sixteenth century.

He obtained the name of the Silent from the imperturbable calm with which he received the news of the projects for the extermination of the heretics, prematurely confided to

him by Henry II. of France. Determined to gain time before undertaking the defence of the inhabitants of the Low Countries, he waited to declare himself a Protestant until the measure of oppression was full; but having once given this irrevocable pledge of his devotion to the persecuted cause, he sacrificed to it repose, fortune, and life. The lessons of courage and holiness that he had received from his mother, Julie de Stolberg, had tempered his character, and armed his mind against all weakness; he was proof against all reverses. His proud motto, 'I will maintain,' became the cry of hope of a whole nation, and the 'Song of William,' a true hymn of war, written by Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde, has never ceased, during three centuries, to sound the echo of patriotic tradition in Holland.

But William I. founded no dynasty. He refused the sovereignty offered to him by the seven provinces which had formed between them the Union of Utrecht, and only accepted full powers during the time of war. He remained the civil and military chief of a republic, and was surnamed the Father of his Country. Surrounded by brothers as valiant as himself, three of whom met a glorious and premature death on the field of battle, like them he paid with his life's blood for the liberation of his country, and died by the dagger of an assassin, thus leaving to his descendants the glory both of his life and of his death, the fame of a liberator and of a martyr. His son Maurice,¹ though only seventeen years of age and still a student at Leyden, was considered as his successor. He was immediately summoned to a seat in the Council of State, and soon afterwards was invested with all his father's offices. As Captain and Admiral-General of the Union, Stadtholder of Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, Guelders, and Overijssel—his cousin, William Louis, son of a brother of William I., being Stadtholder in Friesland and Groningen—he continued his father's work and added to the inheritance of fame that he received from him. But the powers given to him, the successes which he had won, and his great name as a commander, only roused instead of satisfying his ambition.

¹ The son of his second wife, Anne of Saxony.

He thought himself master of the republic. Discontented with the attempts made to hasten the peace, he entered into a dispute with the States of Holland, who showed themselves unfavourable to the continuation of the war, and were alarmed by the encroachments of his power. He claimed to lay down the law to them on the question of the religious differences which divided the republic into two sects, forming as it were two hostile camps. One was that of the Arminians or Remonstrants, so called from the remonstrance or declaration of faith which they had addressed to the States of Holland; the other was that of the Gomarrists or Counter-remonstrants. The former upheld the doctrine of Free-will, the latter that of Predestination. The States of Holland pronounced in favour of the Arminians, and the Stadtholder Maurice of Orange, who was seeking a pretext for a rupture, thought the opportunity favourable for invoking the assistance of the States-General against them. The Advocate-General or Minister of Holland, Olden Barneveldt, undertook to resist him. The soldierly courage of which he had given proof in his youth, his diplomatic experience, the part which he had taken in the foundation and preservation of the republic, the authority which he exercised in the Assembly of the Provincial States, all combined to make Barneveldt a formidable rival to the Prince of Orange. He thus found himself exposed to an implacable resentment, to which he finally fell a victim. Maurice paid no respect to his great age or to the six-and-forty years he had spent in the service of his country. Unable to reproach him with any crime, he determined to withdraw him from his natural judges, the States of Holland, and cause him to be condemned by commissioners appointed for the purpose; and he finally sent to the scaffold the venerable man, seventy-two years of age, who had guided and directed his own early years, the man who, according to the widow of William I., had always acted not merely as a friend, but as a true father to the House of Orange. The fame of the victories by which the liberation of the republic was completed could not efface this stain of blood, and the avenging shadow of his

victim seemed evermore to interpose between the Prince of Orange and the royal power, and to prevent the son of William I. from making himself a king.

The third stadtholder, his brother Frederick Henry,¹ the son of William's last wife, Louise de Coligny, who himself married late in life Amelia of Solms, observed a moderate and conciliating policy which caused to be forgotten the abuses of power of which Maurice had been guilty. Recognised as one of the first captains of his day for the resolute determination with which he carried out his plans, for more than twenty years he showed himself equally skilful in conducting military operations and in establishing and preserving civil order. By a constantly affable demeanour and a loyalty which offered no ground for suspicion, he merited what was said of him, 'that he made every man his friend, and seemed to have enemies only that he might be reconciled to them.'

At his death in 1647, Spain was on the eve of fully recognising the independence of the republic by the treaty of Munster, and Frederick Henry having brought to a successful issue the cause of the enfranchisement of his country, transmitted to his son William II., not indeed a throne, but an inheritance of public gratitude, which might well take the place of a crown.

William II. was young and enterprising, and not at all disposed to follow the pacific example of his father. His imprudent ambition provoked the separation of the two parties which were disputing the government of the republic, and his attempt at a coup d'état only prepared the way for an interregnum. While still a child he had inherited his father's offices, and, later on, his family alliances had also helped to give him a taste for power. He was brother-in-law to the Elector of Brandenburg, who had married his sister Louisa Henrietta, and son-in-law to Charles I. of England and Henrietta Maria, the sister of Louis XIII. He was connected thus with the two first royal families of Europe. The proud descendant of the Stuarts, the Princess Mary, who had been

¹ He succeeded Maurice in 1625.

married to him when hardly more than a child, thought it beneath her not to be the wife of a sovereign, and encouraged her husband not to be satisfied to remain merely 'the official of a republic.' Thus encouraged, the son of Frederick Henry cherished the secret purpose of transforming the elective stadtholdership into an hereditary monarchy.

He had been recognised after his father's death as Captain and Admiral-General, and also as Stadtholder of six provinces of the confederation, and he was secure of the seventh province, Friesland, which retained as Stadtholder his cousin Count William Frederick of Nassau, who was devoted to his interests, and whose succession was promised to him. William II., however, was not contented with even these widely extended powers which seemed to him insufficient for the execution of his design. He needed supreme authority to enable him to render assistance to Charles I., threatened by the revolution which was to cost him his throne and his life, and he could not remain deaf to the despairing appeal of his mother-in-law, who had taken refuge in France, and was there reduced to extreme poverty.

Finding in the opposition of the States an insurmountable obstacle to his wish of intervention, he sought the support of France, who could assist him in offering assistance to his father-in-law, and who besides was tempting his ambition with the offer of new conquests. France had not forgiven the republic for having concluded peace with Spain against her opposition, and in disregard of the convention which forbade either of the two allies to treat separately with the common enemy. William II., supported by the province of Zealand, had vainly opposed the conclusion of this negotiation, and was now ready to come to an understanding with Mazarin to break the treaty of Munster and wrest the Netherlands from Spain. Mazarin promised in return to help him to assert his authority over the States. 'You may suggest to the Prince of Orange,' he wrote to the French ambassador, Servien, 'that circumstances might arise in which, if he were assured of the protection and good-will of their Majesties, he might attain to a greatness far other than that of his predecessors.' The astute cardi-

nal had observed that it was easier to govern a prince than an assembly, and he was accordingly interested in subduing the United Provinces to dependence upon their Stadtholder.

But if William desired war, the United Provinces, and in particular the province of Holland, could not dispense with peace. Now that they had been set free they desired to enjoy their liberty at their ease, and refused to ruin themselves in the service of France, who, by declining the proposals of Spain, had almost justified the defection of her ancient allies. So overburdened were they with taxes that they had been forced to neglect their navy, which had been the great instrument of their prosperity. The maintenance of their land forces, amounting to about 57,000 men, exhausted their means. They could not consent to keep up an army which was not needed for their defence, and might be menacing to their freedom.

The province of Holland, which contributed more than half towards the expenses of the Confederation, crushed under the weight of the new loans which were intended to meet an annual deficit of eight millions of florins, had demanded and obtained from the States-General the dismissal of 21,000 men, thereby reducing the army to 36,000 men, and saving the State an expenditure of two and a half millions of florins annually. Not content with this, a further reduction of 7,000 men was required according to the agreement formerly made, which would be chiefly carried out by the suppression of fifty-five foreign companies, and would reduce the army to an effective strength of 29,000 men, the expense of which was calculated at 5,560,000 florins. The States-General had consented to this. There only remained to be arranged for the disbanding of the twenty-nine companies of infantry, numbering about 2,900 men, who were part of the contingent of Holland. This last step was the only one disputed, and concerning which the settlement remained doubtful. The safety of the country was not concerned in so small a reduction, and Holland would no doubt easily have obtained the satisfaction she demanded had not the Prince of Orange sought to turn the difference to account instead of pacifying it.

Such was the origin of a conflict which almost degenerated into a civil war. For the furtherance of his plans it was necessary for the Prince of Orange to replace the army on a war footing, and he could not in any case resign himself to the disbanding of the foreign regiments in whom he had entire confidence. He flattered himself that he might move the States-General and even the States of Holland to renounce their pacific policy. The States-General were displeased with the pretensions of Holland, who seemed to them disposed to domineer over the republic, and there were attached to his cause in the federal assembly several deputies who were desirous of obtaining commissions in the army for their sons. On the other hand, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, the national poet Cats, weakened by age (he was then seventy-three), seemed to him more disposed to yield than to struggle, and he flattered himself that he should easily gain the votes of the principal members of the States of that province. With this object, the Princess Royal, who, according to a contemporary account, was so proud that she never returned any visits, stooped for once to pay familiar visits to such of the burghers' wives as had the reputation of ruling their husbands. The Prince of Orange hoped thus to retard the disbanding of the forces, which he had been putting off for a year. But his expectations were disappointed. The States of Holland, determined to put an end to a debate which seemed to them unreasonably prolonged, frustrated the perpetual adjournments of which they had complained, and themselves fixed the period for the disbanding of the twenty-nine companies whose dismissal had been promised to them. After twelve days of useless deliberations they issued definite orders to that effect. The step had been provoked, but it was precipitate and might give rise to a legal contest as to their competency. The Prince of Orange, therefore, eager to hasten a struggle from which he expected an easy victory, chose to consider the resolution of the States of Holland as a signal for the rupture of the Union, and the very next day solemnly demanded reparation from the States-General, who in their turn issued a counter order. The Prince made skilful use of the rivalry of

power between the two assemblies to obtain for himself extraordinary powers which were contrary to the laws of the Confederation. By the terms of the resolution, which was passed by only four provinces,¹ of which two² were represented by but one deputy each, he was authorised to take all measures necessary for the maintenance of order and peace, and particularly for the preservation of the Union. 'The States-General consequently commissioned him to visit the town councils of Holland, accompanied by six members of the States-General and of the Council of State, with all the pomp of a military escort, including a large number of officers. He was charged to address them with remonstrances and threats intended to intimidate the provincial States.'

This was the first act of the coup d'état that he had prepared, and his mistake was quickly shown him. The town councils, not allowing themselves to be either discouraged or dis-united, proved almost unanimously determined to make common cause with the provincial States, who were their lawful superiors. They were on their guard against the overtures made to them. Some evaded them by merely replying that they would send in their reports to the States; others, more bold, complained of an interference which deprived them of the freedom they needed for their deliberations. The Council of Dordrecht, of which Jacob de Witt, father of John de Witt, was burgomaster, consented to receive the stadtholder on condition that he should propose no resolution subversive of the rights of the Council or of the States of Holland. The Prince, having been admitted, desired one of the members of the deputation which accompanied him, Aartsbergen, to make known his proposals. He demanded the censure and disavowal of the deputies of the town who had voted in the Assembly of the States for the dismissal of the troops. The Council waited till the Prince had retired before deliberating, and contented themselves then with justifying the accused, and declaring that they had merely obeyed their instructions. William having demanded and obtained a

¹ Zealand, Overijssel, Friesland, and Groningen.

² Overijssel and Friesland.

second hearing, June 10, 1650, Aartsbergen declared in his presence, 'in bitter and insufferable language,' that the envoys of the States-General would not retire before the Council had declared whether it withdrew from the rupture of the Union which had been imputed to them; he openly accused the deputies who represented the towns in the provincial States, and denounced them 'as worthy of punishment in life and goods.' The Council in defending them decided to adhere to their first declaration, but repelled at the same time the offensive accusation, which they qualified as injurious and calumnious, and resolved to bring it before the States as offering an affront to the authority and freedom of the province. They ventured to communicate to the Prince this haughty manifesto, and having by his desire again deliberated upon it, unanimously adopted it anew.

To avoid exposure to such scenes, the Council of Amsterdam, guided by the energetic exhortations of the two brothers Bicker, Andrew, the former burgomaster, and Cornelius Bicker van Swieten, the then burgomaster, sent two councillors, Anthony Aetgens van Waveren and Peter Hasselaar, to meet the Prince and represent to him that his journey was useless, and that he could not be received as the envoy of the States-General. William took no heed of this warning, but the Council of Amsterdam was not to be intimidated by his appearance. They made known to him, while still outside the walls of the town, that he should be received in his capacity of stadtholder, but that he must not hope to obtain an audience if he insisted upon being accompanied by the deputies of the States-General. The Prince refused to yield, and the Council, which had taken all military measures for defence, declared that all its sittings should be adjourned until after his departure, and merely sent excuses to the Prince.

On his return to the Hague, William did not conceal his resentment at being thus set aside. Having reported the results of his tour to the States-General, he entered the Assembly of the States of Holland, gave them notice of his protest, and demanded reparation for the insult which he complained of having received from the Municipal Council of

Amsterdam. 'He took so high a tone,' wrote the French ambassador Brasset, 'that even the members of the Assembly who had been most irritated agreed in concluding that the Prince might be in a humour to risk the last extremities, and that the best thing would be to consider some means of giving him satisfaction and of bringing matters to a compromise.' The deputies of the town of Amsterdam apologised to him for the behaviour of the Council, hoping thus to induce him to withdraw his complaint, but this the Prince refused.¹ Meanwhile the States of Holland were making all possible advances necessary to bring about an arrangement. By William's own avowal, given in his Memoir on the events of the year 1650, they requested that he would himself make some proposal concerning the war establishment, and they promised to revoke provisionally the orders given for the disbanding of the troops.

After some renewed conferences, the Prince promised them to come to an arrangement with the Council of State, which shared the executive power with him, for the transmission of new proposals for an amicable solution to the States-General. The States of Holland made choice of commissioners to examine these proposals and determined to communicate them to the town councils. The only point to be settled concerned the reduction of about 1,300 men. The difference might now be considered as arranged. 'The business of the reduction of the troops was in a very fair way,' wrote a little later one of the principal deputies of Holland, 'it would be probably settled by the towns without a dissentient voice, the nobles alone not agreeing, and all that was needful now was to follow the conciliatory advice which the Pensionary had undertaken to put in writing, according to the opinions of the members.'

The States of Holland, however, did not feel themselves completely reassured. They feared still to be exposed to further visitations of their province by the Prince of Orange.

¹ Memoir concerning the Amsterdam affair, written by the Prince's own hand. *Archives de la Maison d'Orange*, published by M. Groen van Prinsterer, vol. iv. p. 371.

Determined to prevent this, they declared that the stadtholder and the deputies of the States-General might not be received by the town councils without their permission. The Prince having demanded an explanation of this resolution, which he said was contrary to the agreement just re-established, the States of Holland addressed to the States of the other provinces a solemn manifesto claiming the future free exercise of their sovereign powers. In this they stated how easy it would be now to come to an agreement, since all pretext for any difference concerning the reduction of the forces could easily be set aside, unless it was determined to take aggressive measures towards them.

This was no overbold suggestion. Since his return to the Hague the Prince of Orange had only allowed his negotiations to continue that he might have time to prepare the measures already concerted. His partisans had long been advising the most audacious attempts. His cousin, Count William Frederick of Nassau, Stadtholder of Friesland, encouraged him warmly to make the weight of his power felt. 'Keep no terms,' he wrote to him, 'with these traitors and enemies of the State, whom I should heartily like to see on the scaffold. I trust they will be punished according to their deserts and their disloyalty.' On the eve of the action which the Prince of Orange was about to attempt he wrote to him again: 'As I was passing near the Assembly of the States I saw the deputies you had mentioned to me exchanging salutations and compliments; I hope that to-morrow your Highness will have them all together, and that all whom your Highness knows to be your enemies, and consequently the enemies of the State, will be of the party.'

It was he also who suggested the idea of depriving the States of Holland of all power of resistance by the seizure of Amsterdam. The thing would be done, he said, if the Prince would give him some good officers, and some cavalry and infantry. But he recommended him to say nothing of it beforehand. 'Threats only help to put people on their guard,' he wrote; 'you should let deeds and blows speak for you.'

William had allowed himself to be easily persuaded, and had made Amsterdam the principal object in the enterprise he contemplated. He considered this town as the enemy of his House. The burghers of Amsterdam, proud of their wealth and passionately attached to their independence, had never shown any gratitude for the services of the Princes of Orange. They said that it was only fair that they should be well served for their money, and that if the stadtholders did not properly fulfil their office of Captain-General, they could find others to do it for the same price. They had offended William also by allowing allusion to be made on the stage to his connection with a French actress named Labarre. The Prince had revenged himself by sneering at the ladies of Amsterdam, accusing them of being too masculine in their appearance, and saying in jest that they were more fitted to make prisoners of war than captives of love. He was said also to be tempted by the forty millions deposited in the city bank, and to intend to make use of them to raise himself to the sovereignty of the United Provinces. He calculated at least upon securing the establishment of a new Council more submissive to his authority. 'When we have marched the troops into the town,' he wrote in his instructions, 'we must change the magistrates, and must have ready the list of those whom we wish to set in their places.'

He was secure of the goodwill of the army. 'Do not fail,' advised one of his counsellors, 'to flatter the troops, and take pains to make yourself popular, so as the more easily to make an end of your enemies.' The Count of Nassau wrote to advise him to be sure to make the most of the fact of the States of Holland, and particularly those of Amsterdam, having wished to retrench the pay of the soldiers, which would affect all these poor people, and they would thus be more zealous and more eager to be employed;—small things like this were often of assistance in great affairs. The most minute orders were carefully given to all those who acted as accomplices of the Prince. The Count of Nassau, his chief adviser, of whose discretion and energy he had already made proof, was charged with their execution. To him was joined,

as confidential adviser, the son of the former ambassador of the republic in Paris, Aerssen van Sommelsdyck, colonel of horse, member of the States of Holland, and one of the wealthiest inhabitants of the province, who was recommended by his coolness and moderation. He had secured also the assistance of his cousin Frederick, Count Dohna, colonel of the Guelders regiment, who was warmly attached to all the family interests, and whose father was governor of his principality of Orange. The plan of attack was drawn up with the utmost secrecy. The Count of Nassau had begun by reconnoitring Amsterdam and the suburbs of the town; each day's march of the troops and the positions they were to occupy had all been pre-arranged. The Nimeguen and Arnheim horse were to march at a given signal, as if only for exercise. The garrison of Utrecht had orders to be ready for a sally, under the pretext of meeting the Princess Royal, William's wife, who happened to be passing near the town. In order to ensure by stratagem the entry into Amsterdam, it was resolved to make use of the Utrecht boat, which arrived very early in the morning. Fifty officers, under the command of a resolute chief, Major Gentillot, were selected to conceal themselves on board. Once landed, they were to seize one of the gates, called that of the Regulars, which would yield without resistance, and thus open a passage for Count William's horse. Finally, measures had been taken for the arrest of the two chief magistrates of Amsterdam, Andrew Bicker and his colleague, Aetgens van Waveren, who were to be sent to Utrecht to confer with the Prince, so that, deprived of their advice and assistance, surprise and alarm might induce the other councillors to give up the town more readily. The expedients commonly employed to throw dust in people's eyes concerning all such undertakings were not forgotten. 'In order not to alienate the people of Amsterdam,' wrote to the Prince of Orange his confidant, Van Sommelsdyck, 'it will be necessary to issue a brief proclamation, in which the cause of quarrel will be declared to be merely with certain of the magistrates of the city, accusing them of wilfully breaking the Union which has been the security of the republic, and of

desiring to change the form of government for their own advantage and the ruin of the State.'

William II. was envious of Mazarin's good fortune. Six months previously Mazarin had caused to be imprisoned at Vincennes the Prince de Condé, the victor of Rocroy, Fribourg, Nordlingen, and Sens, with his brother, the Prince de Conti, and his brother-in-law, the Duc de Longueville, as companions of his captivity. 'On hearing the news of this arrest, the Prince of Orange,' writes Brasset, the French ambassador to the Hague, 'did not mince matters in the expression of his feelings of admiration and pleasure at such a success. You may be sure that this is not mere affectation or civility, for I know that he takes every opportunity of blaming those who forget the duty and obligations of subjects towards their sovereigns. He easily persuaded himself,' adds Brasset, 'that it will be rather to his advantage than to his prejudice to imitate the French proceedings.'

The day after that on which the States of Holland had published their letter of justification to the States of the other provinces, William thought himself in a position to put his plan in execution, and the attempt was very near being a complete success. Six deputies of the Assembly of Holland seemed to him responsible for the ungracious reception he had met from the town councils of that province. He feared, too, that they would head the party of resistance to him, which might call him severely to account for his attack upon Amsterdam, and perhaps might make him bitterly rue his audacity. These were Jacob de Witt, burgomaster of Dordrecht; Duyst van Voorhout, burgomaster of Delft; John de Waal, burgomaster, and Albert Ruyl, pensionary of Haarlem; Nanning Keyser, pensionary of Hoorn, and Stellingwerf, pensionary of Medemblick. He allowed no scruples to hinder him from securing their persons. On Saturday, July 30, 1650, at eight o'clock in the morning, the Prince summoned them to his palace, each unknown to the others, under pretext of seeking for some means of coming to an understanding. As they arrived, unsuspectingly, he caused them in turn to be arrested by the commandant of the Guards, Lieu-

tenant-Colonel Meteren, each being conducted to a separate room, where he was closely guarded by two soldiers. Precautions were meanwhile taken to prevent any rising. The Prince's palace was garrisoned by his own regiment of Guards, 400 strong. The town was filled with troops belonging to the neighbouring garrisons of Rotterdam and Delft, who were summoned in turn so as to create no alarm. The next evening, the six prisoners were taken in two of the Prince's coaches, by roundabout ways and under a strong guard, to the castle of Loevestein, the Vincennes of Holland.

To parade his authority, and to enjoy the confusion of his adversaries, the Prince of Orange informed the States-General of the use he had made of his powers, promising to communicate to them the reason for his action. At the same time he sent for the Grand Pensionary of Holland, Cats, to desire him to announce to the Assembly, together with the news of the arrest of the deputies, the departure of the troops sent against Amsterdam under the orders of the Count of Nassau. The Grand Pensionary, unable to hide his concern made, however, no remonstrance to the Prince. He contented himself with requesting him to give in writing the names of the deputies whom the stadtholder had imprisoned and the reason for their incarceration, because, as he said, he was not sure of his memory,¹ and William readily consented to satisfy him. The announcement threw the Assembly into great uneasiness. The rumour had been spread that other members—Beveren, of Dordrecht, Meerman, burgomaster of Leyden, and Nieuport, pensionary of Schiedam—had only escaped by their accidental absence from sharing the fate of their colleagues. Several deputies fearing that the same fate threatened them, left the hall of Assembly hastily, to retire to their own towns. Of six deputies of Amsterdam only two remained; Kok, lord of Purmeraud, immortalised by Rembrandt's picture, and the pensionary Boom. To conceal their anxiety the Assembly broke up, having adjourned till the second day following, knowing well that by that time the success or failure of the

¹ Aitzema, *Zaken van Staet*, vol. iii. p. 445. *Mémoires de Van der Capellen* vol. ii. p. 281.

stadtholder's enterprise would place them at the mercy of the victor, or restore them to the free exercise of their own power. But while the Prince flattered himself that he could win by a surprise the submission of the town, accident frustrated the execution of his plan. The cavalry had been ordered to assemble at five o'clock in the morning, that they might form a vanguard to the infantry. They were to march from Scherpenzel and to meet under the orders of Count William of Nassau at Abcouden, two leagues from Amsterdam, and in order to disarm suspicion they set out in small detachments. Notwithstanding the summer season, the night was dark and rainy; the lights by which the road was to be known could not be seen, and the principal division, comprising twelve companies of horse, under the command of Captain Mom, lost themselves in the underwood on the plain of Amersfort, and, in spite of their having a guide, only rejoined the headquarters at eight o'clock in the morning. They had besides met the Hamburg mail, and Captain Mom, not knowing the object of the expedition, had allowed it to continue on its way. The alarm had thus been given to the town early in the morning.

Of the four acting city magistrates, Valkenier, president of the Council of Burgomasters, had died a few days previously; two others, Nicholas Corver and Anthony Aetgens van Waveren, were absent or detained at the Hague; Cornelius Bicker van Swieten was alone at his post, not having responded to the invitation of the Prince of Orange, which had seemed to him suspicious. Without allowing himself to be alarmed or disheartened, he at once proceeded to concert arrangements with the President of the Council of Sheriffs, John Huydecooper, lord of Maarseveen, and to their vigilance Amsterdam owed its safety. The town council, summoned by them, met that same morning, and means of resistance were at once improvised. The gates were shut, and the drawbridges raised. The thirty civic companies of arquebusiers, the National Guard of those days, were placed under arms and took possession of the posts assigned to them. Two thousand troops of the militia (*waartgelders*) were enrolled in

five companies and taken into the pay of the city. The sailors were enlisted and armed, and were employed to drag ninety pieces of cannon to the ramparts. Meanwhile the eight frigates and three men-of-war stationed in the harbour took up their places in the basin of the Amstel, and on the arm of the sea called the Y, which surrounds the town with a girdle of naval fortifications. Some very bold proposals were deliberated upon, which were supported by Cornelius Bicker and his brother Andrew, and only adjourned by a majority of two votes. It was decided, however, that in case of necessity the dykes should be cut and the surrounding country flooded, in order to secure the safety of the town against any attack.

The preliminary steps for letting in the waters were already in full activity. To gain possession of Amsterdam it would now be necessary to lay regular siege to it; and there were insuperable obstacles to the siege of a town situated at the head of a gulf, amidst easily submerged marsh lands, and only to be reached by roads and narrow paths intersected by canals. The enterprise, therefore, was a failure as soon as it was discovered. The confederates, who had been hidden in the Utrecht boat, and who were to have opened the door to the invaders, were surprised by daylight, before the arrival of the latter, and, going out to meet them, informed them that it was useless to advance any further.

The Count of Nassau advanced within range of the town ramparts as far as Oudekerke, that he might deliver to the magistrates the Prince of Orange's letter explaining his arrival; and two sheriffs, Huydecooper van Maarseveen and Van der Does, were sent in an armed boat to meet him. They undertook that the Council should hold further deliberations which might satisfy the Prince, and requested him to withdraw, declaring haughtily 'that he might find cause to regret forcing the townspeople to resort to those means of defence with which God and nature had endowed them.'

When the Prince of Orange was informed of this check by a letter from the Count of Nassau, in which he declared himself 'much troubled,' he could not conceal his vexation, but

left the dinner-table hastily, and shut himself up in his closet without speaking to any one. He persuaded himself, however, that his own presence amongst his troops would turn the tide of fortune in his favour, and seemed determined to achieve by force what he had failed to win by surprise. Vainly his best advisers tried to hold him back. Aartsbergen, who had accompanied him in his visits to the Town Councils of Holland, and who until now had seemed to encourage a policy of violence, represented to him that if he went on he would inevitably bring about his ruin, and that, once he allowed his authority to be destroyed, he would never be able to reinstate it. He was, however, deaf even to the respectful remonstrances of the Courts of Justice, which offered their mediation, and leaving at the Hague his company of guards, he mounted his horse on Monday, August 1, in the court of his palace, in the presence of the deputies of the States-General. He was followed by a large number of officers eager to distinguish themselves under his orders. Amongst them were the Count of Brederode, a major-general in the army, his maternal grand-uncle; his cousin the Prince of Tarentum, who had left France after the Fronde, and had come to seek his fortune in the army of the United Provinces; Frederick de Schomberg, his chamberlain, who became afterwards a Marshal of France, and returned to his service after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. But suddenly, near Haarlem, halfway on his journey, there came to meet him Louis of Nassau, Lord of Beverwaert, one of his most devoted and most enlightened councillors. He put before the Prince the danger which threatened him if the dykes were cut, and represented to him that that he was exposing himself and his forces to the risk of perishing in the midst of an inundation. 'The inhabitants of the town,' writes Pomponne in his memoirs, 'had already opened several sluices, and the water which had spread over the low-lying lands had forced the troops to seek more raised ground, and to retire to the high roads. It lay with them to open all the others, and to imperil the army by submerging the country.' They paused before the dangers of a civil war, which would not have been less fatal than an inundation to the interests of commerce.

The fear of finding themselves isolated assisted also to deter them from over-hasty action. No one of the other towns appeared to support them. Haarlem allowed her gates to be opened freely to the Prince's army; the citizens of Leyden carried pickaxes, spades, and other such material to the camp. As to the States of Holland, taken by surprise by the arrest of their principal members, held in check by the garrison which the Prince had left at the Hague, and treated with suspicion at least, if not with enmity, by the deputies of the other provinces, they dared not give the signal for resistance. They contented themselves with consulting with the States-General in order to call upon the Prince to desist from the siege of Amsterdam, and to obtain the despatch of commissioners with power to recall him. William, on his part, having failed in his attempt, saw the necessity of not persisting in it, but did not choose to appear forced to relinquish it. He accordingly gave orders to his lieutenants to occupy the principal high roads so as to secure the troops against any danger from inundation, and at the same time showed a disposition to take the first steps towards an understanding. In the hope that these might be well received, he wrote a letter to the burgomasters, which he sent by one of his officers, complaining of the refusal of the authorities to admit the Count of Nassau, and demanded an audience for himself.¹

The Council was summoned. The principal deputies representing it in the Assembly of the States, Corver, Geelvinck, Hasselaar, and De Graeff, had already returned to take their places in it; and those who had remained at the Hague, Kok and the Pensionary Boom, had been recalled. Notwithstanding the obstinate firmness of Cornelius Bicker, the policy of conciliation won the day. Four commissioners were sent to the Prince to offer him their compliments, and to assure him that he would be received. 'I told them,' writes the Prince in the memoir he left behind him, 'that I would not enter

¹ The Prince's memoir. This memoir, as well as the correspondence of the Prince with the commandant of the fortress of Loevestein, has been published by Van Hasselt in the *Recueil de Gids*, 1843.

their town unless I had my troops with me. They replied that they had orders to permit my entrance only with the usual escort.' William waived that point, and assured them that, so far as he was concerned, he could conclude the business quite as well outside the town, provided that they showed him regular powers for treating. He even offered to come to an understanding with them as to the withdrawal of his forces. The next day the deputies returned with full powers to negotiate. The Prince then notified to them in writing the one condition on which he would enter into any arrangement, namely, the exclusion of the burgomaster, Cornelius Bicker van Swieten, and of his brother Andrew. This unjust demand would certainly have broken off the conference, if the secret jealousy of the commissioners of the influence of the two brothers had not induced them to yield. The treaty was signed on August 3; and the burgomaster, far from opposing it, insisted that the Council should accept his resignation and that of his brother. No finer example could have been given, and no higher title to the honours of public life could be found, than thus to have saved their fellow-citizens from political servitude by courageous resistance, and from civil war by a timely resignation. The municipal council of Amsterdam was not slow to render due homage to the two burgomasters in a proclamation which defended their conduct, and which was sent to William while he was still encamped under the walls of the town.

The Prince of Orange might not, however, have obtained this satisfaction if he had not used such haste in concluding the negotiations. Hardly had the members of the Amsterdam Council started to sign the agreement with him, when a deputy from the States-General arrived in haste in the town to persuade the authorities to refuse the demands of the Stadtholder. Whilst he was assuring them, too late, that the States-General had just despatched orders to recall the Stadtholder, William sent them word that the business was concluded.

This convention left undecided the fate of the arrested deputies. They had been sent to Loevestein under the escort

of Meteren, a lieutenant-colonel in the Prince of Orange's guards, who was appointed commandant of the fortress. Within the walls of that old castle they found the remembrance still existing of one of the most illustrious victims of the tyranny practised by the Stadtholder Maurice, uncle of William II. Grotius had been imprisoned there before them, and had only escaped after two years of captivity by the ingenious device of his wife, who had smuggled him out in the chest which she had used to convey his books to him. Measures had now been taken to frustrate every attempt at liberating the prisoners of the Prince of Orange, who, fearing an attack, had sent a supply of powder to the commandant of the fortress.

The unjust persecution endured by the deputies did not shake their courage. They were so closely guarded that they could hold no communication with any one, even by letter. But, notwithstanding the perplexity in which they were placed by their ignorance of events, they were not tempted to yield or even to waver. Twelve days after their arrest, the Prince of Orange made a complaint to the commandant about a letter which they had written to him. Annoyed, no doubt, at his failure to induce them to ask for mercy, William sent the following orders to increase the severity of their imprisonment: 'You are no longer to receive any letters from them, nor to permit them to send any to any person whatsoever, and to take particular care also that none shall reach them from outside.' He was not long, however, before mitigating his severity, and the very next day began to give permission for visits. But he still enjoined the strictest vigilance; he required reports of the prisoners' conversation, and wrote again, at the very moment when he was about to release them, 'You may allow M. Keyser to walk occasionally upon the ramparts, but never without sufficient escort.'

Notwithstanding their courageous attitude, the example of Amsterdam had been in favour of the party of compromise rather than of resistance. The Council of Dordrecht, it is true, had not wavered in its courageous firmness; it appealed boldly to the rights which had been attacked by the kidnap-

ping of their burgomaster, and called upon the deputies representing it in the Assembly of the States 'to use their utmost efforts for the deliverance of the captives before accepting any proposal made.' But the other Town Councils did not show themselves disposed to adopt the same line of conduct. They consented to negotiate with the Prince of Orange, and offered to obtain from the prisoners the resignation of their offices as a condition of freedom. The Pensionary of Delft, Duyst van Voorhout, had already caused his relations as well as the Town Council to intercede for his discharge, and now took the initiative in requesting the favour of being relieved from all employment, on the score of age. The Council of Dordrecht itself recognised the necessity of submission, and on August 14 Jacob de Witt sent in the papers in which he resigned all public office. The Prince obtained a similar pledge from the other prisoners, and then set them at liberty after a captivity of three weeks.

Angry feelings could not be so quickly allayed, and the two parties remained facing each other in a hostile attitude. To avoid the difficulties of a public entry at the Hague, the Prince spent a few days on one of his estates, and then returned in his hunting-dress. He contented himself with the letter which he had addressed to the States of the province, in which he represented his conduct as having been in conformity with the first orders given him by the States-General to re-establish order and to preserve the Union. The States of Zealand notified to him their unqualified approval. The States of Friesland were equally cordial in their congratulations. The other provinces were satisfied to express their thanks in terms more vague. But the States of Holland, to whom he had especially addressed his defence of his conduct, did not consider it necessary to take any notice of his memorandum, and desired Cats, their Grand Pensionary, to lay it by unopened. They succeeded also in obtaining the satisfaction they demanded, in the dismissal of a part of the forces, to which William had been so much opposed. The States-General finally disbanded fifty-five companies of foot and

twelve of horse—altogether about six thousand men. The question of the dismissal of thirteen hundred men, to which had finally been reduced the difference which provoked the conflict, was, it is true, adjourned, but only for a short time, and the States of Holland might congratulate themselves on a compromise by which they partially gained their cause. They were obliged to promise not to take upon themselves again the right to dismiss their contingent of troops, but they still reserved to themselves freedom to grant or refuse their payment. With this condition they voted for the reduced military establishment as proposed.

The agreement was only apparent. The republican party, convinced by William's attempt that he had intended to change the government of the United Provinces, maintained an attitude of suspicion towards him. Amsterdam was especially bold; the companies of the civic guard were raised from twenty to fifty-four men, and were kept constantly exercised; numerous soldiers were taken into the pay of the town, and the work of the fortifications was actively pushed forward. 'These worthies of Holland,' writes Brassset, the French ambassador, 'have bent, but have not been broken.' The opponents of the Prince of Orange treated him as an enemy, and their hostility is thus explained in a contemporary pamphlet:—'If my goods are stolen, my hands tied, my freedom taken from me, what matters it to me if he who does this is a Spaniard, a barbarian, or a fellow-countryman? If I lose my liberty and become a slave, the fashion signifies little. Freedom is a noble and delicate thing, which must not be touched by any one, and which desires only to be let alone and not troubled.'

William, on his side, notwithstanding the satisfaction he pretended to feel, could not disguise from himself that his coup d'état was a failure. He had succeeded neither in making himself master of Amsterdam, nor in breaking down the power of the States. He had obtained no other advantage than the retirement of eight obnoxious magistrates, and he foresaw that such of their partisans as from fear or policy submitted to the present state of affairs would seize the first oppor-

tunity to renew their action. He did not, however, renounce the idea of getting the government into his own hands. 'He has resigned himself to the dismissal of the troops,' writes Brasset, 'and is making the best of this disagreeable necessity; but I feel sure that, seeing what a game there is to play, he is still thinking how to push matters on so as to annihilate as far as possible a party which he distrusts.'

While he seemed occupied only with hunting-parties on his estate of Dieren, in Guelders, that he might the better conceal his ambitious designs, he was still endeavouring to further them by the project of a secret treaty which he was negotiating with France. Arrogating to himself already the right to dispose as he pleased of the republic, he signed a convention with Count d'Estrades, whom he had summoned to the Hague. By this the King of France and the Prince of Orange engaged themselves 'to attack conjointly the Netherlands on May 1, 1651, with an army of 20,000 foot and 10,000 horse, to break at the same time with Cromwell, to re-establish Charles II. as King of England, and to make no treaty with Spain excepting in concert with each other.' The Prince of Orange guaranteed a fleet of fifty vessels besides the land contingent, and in return for his co-operation was promised the absolute possession of the city of Antwerp and the Duchy of Brabant or Marquisate of the Holy Roman Empire. William thus interested France in the success of his cause by making ready to resume the war with Spain, and calculated, as he told his confidants, on profiting by her assistance to disperse the cabal opposed to him, in which effort he was himself incessantly engaged. 'If he had lived,' writes Racine in his 'Historical Fragments,' 'we may pretty confidently assert that there would have been an end of the republic in Holland.'

The internal pacification amounted then to no more than a truce, when three months later the Prince of Orange, having over-fatigued and heated himself in the chase, was seized with small-pox, of which in a few days he died. He was thus carried off at the age of twenty-four, in the full force and flower of his age, leaving only one son, born a week after his father's death. William II. had lost the best part of the inheritance

he might have bequeathed to him, the attachment of the republican party which he had irretrievably alienated. One of the allegorical medals struck by his enemies after his death represents a fiery steed rushing towards the sun which is rising over Amsterdam: on the reverse appears the fall of Phaëton, with this inscription: *Magnis excidit ausis*—'By his great designs he destroyed himself.'

His attempt at a coup d'état was destined to press heavily and long upon the fate of the posthumous son, who had to wait twenty-two years before succeeding to his ancestral functions. It closed the succession to him for many years, by making the stadtholdership a standing menace to the public freedom. The name of the Castle of Loevestein, put forward as a war-cry and rallying note, was to be made use of henceforward to perpetuate irritating recollections, and recall the constantly reviving fears of the party opposed to the House of Orange. By one of those sudden changes of fortune which generally follow too ambitious a grasp at supreme power, the death of the Prince of Orange, following so closely his attack upon Holland, left the future destinies of his house at the mercy of his enemies. It was the signal for a change of government. 'These people,' wrote the French ambassador, 'appear to intend to profit by the opportunity to govern themselves.' Milton, the great republican poet of England, addressed pointed congratulations to the States-General on the opportune death of the Stadtholder which enabled them to escape from servitude.

The son of William II., an orphan before his birth, and named William like his father, seemed destined to succeed to little more than the paternal name. No child, indeed, could have succeeded to the powers exercised by the late Stadtholder. The family of Orange, which for nearly a century had been invested with the principal civil and military authority in the confederation, was only represented now by an heir so delicate and fragile that it was doubtful if he would live. And the weakness of the house was still further increased by the divisions which took place round his cradle. The rivalry of the two Princesses of Orange, the Princess Dowager and the

Princess Royal, the mother and widow of William II., and their hostility towards Count William of Nassau, who alone could have given them efficient aid, favoured the attempt made by the republican party to establish a new government without a stadtholder.

The Princess Dowager, Amelia of Solms, formerly maid-of-honour to Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, had not sufficient force of character to enable her to rally round herself the partisans of her grandson. She was affable and gracious, as we see her in her portrait in the Amsterdam Gallery, and according to the English ambassador, Temple, who knew her well, 'she was a woman of the most wit and good sense in general that he had known;' and there could be no doubt that the young Prince, so early deprived of his mother, owed to the care of his grandmother the many great qualities he possessed. But she had the reputation of not being disinterested, and was said to be fond of intrigue. She liked to play a double game, and affected a desire to come to a good understanding with the republican party; while, according to the reports sent to Mazarin by the French ambassador, 'if she showed any cordiality towards the chiefs of the party of Holland, it was only in order to obtain the continuation of the pension usually accorded by that province to the widow of their Governor.' At the same time her dislike to her daughter-in-law, the Princess Royal, induced her to appear averse from all monarchical ideas; and she went so far one day as to say, in presence of the French ambassador, 'that she considered Cromwell as a great man, who had known how to execute a lofty and perilous design.' Not all her advances, however, towards the republican party could obtain her credit for sincerity. 'She is detested and despised by the Dutch cabal,' writes a French correspondent, 'although she lent her aid to make peace with Spain.'

She had been successful in looking after her own interests. 'None ever showed more the force of order and economy,' writes Temple, 'than this Princess, who with small revenues, never above 12,000*l.* a year since her husband's death, lived always in as great plenty, and more curiousness and elegance than

is seen in many greater courts.' Her furniture was magnificent, and she was served always on gold plate; all that she touched even was of that metal. When she did not reside on her estate of Turnehout in Brabant, or at Zevenbergen in Holland, she lived at the Hague in the Brantwyck Palace, which is now the royal residence. Her favourite abode was the Forest House, which she had built in the woods of the Hague, in honour of her husband, the Stadtholder Frederick Henry. It was designed by the skilful architect Peter Poot; and nine of the greatest painters of the day, including Rubens and Vandyke, had decorated the principal apartment, the Orange hall, which has remained intact for two centuries, and in which the last Queen of the Netherlands preserved, even in our day, the tradition of a princely hospitality.

The Princess of Orange, Mary, daughter of Charles I., known as the Princess Royal, left at nineteen a widow, and about to become a mother, nearly fell a victim to her grief. Born on the steps of a throne that had been overturned to give place to a scaffold, married to a Prince who might have been expected long to enjoy the authority of Stadtholder, but who had now been struck down by death, she yet found in her hopes of motherhood strength to support the weight of her misfortunes. She resolved to remain constant in her widowhood, because, as she nobly said, she desired to be married only to the interests of her son; and, notwithstanding her youth, she might have been found capable of ruling the affairs of the State, for she had wit, judgment, and a great deal of prudence. But she injured the cause of the young Prince by a pride, of which the fine portrait by Van der Helst in the Amsterdam Gallery has preserved the expression. She was persuaded that, in remaining faithful to her, the friends of the House of Orange did but fulfil their duty, and thought it due to her birth that she should stoop to no familiarity, 'which does not at all please people nowadays,' wrote some Dutchmen who had gone to pay their respects to her before starting on a journey to France. She habitually neglected to secure by any advances on her part the support of the wives of the principal deputies, who might easily have won over their

husbands to the interests of her son. She admitted no one to her table. Thus, when the French ambassador paid her a visit at her country seat of Honsholredyck, as he would not consent to eat with her attendants, he was obliged, as he naively writes, to suffer the inconvenience of travelling there and back without refreshment. She continued with her son to inhabit the apartments of the Stadtholders at the Hague, in a wing of the old palace of the Counts of Holland, of which the States-General and the States of Holland occupied the other part. Her principal adviser was Kerekhove, Lord of Heenvliet, Grand Forester of Holland, whom she appointed steward of her household. He had won her favour by the memory of his connection with the King of England, by whom he had been employed in several negotiations, and by the English birth of his wife. But he betrayed the confidence reposed in him, and his disloyalty becoming known at last brought him to deserved disgrace.

Jealous of the free exercise of her natural rights, the Princess Royal had no intention of sharing them with her mother-in-law, whose lower origin she scorned, and she allowed no occasion to pass of treating her with arrogance.

The disputes raised as to the guardianship of the young Prince embittered the animosity of the two Princesses, and made them public. As they could not arrive at an amicable arrangement, they appealed to the States of Holland, who referred the case to the provincial law courts. Whilst they were examining the matter, the Elector of Brandenburg, by his support of the pretensions of the Princess Dowager, whose eldest daughter he had married, and by his appeal to the rights of succession which would accrue to him in case of the death of his nephew, only injured her cause by his interference. After vain attempts to bring about an agreement, the judges finally decided in favour of the claims of the Princess Royal. She was acknowledged as chief guardian, and the most important part of the guardian's authority was left in her hands. The Princess Dowager and the Elector of Brandenburg appealed to the Great Council, which had the power of confirming or reversing the sentences of the Court of Justice.

Two months afterwards the Great Council pronounced for them, and a compromise was thus arranged by which the Princess Royal recognised their right to take part in the guardianship; her share in it, however, being equal to that of the two others combined.

The only chief round whom the Orange party might have rallied was Count William Frederick of Nassau, Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, the grandson of John, surnamed the Old, youngest brother of William I. He had distinguished himself in the war of independence, was brave and enterprising, as well as frank and open, and added to natural kindness of heart the most winning courtesy of manner. But the recollection of his attempt against Amsterdam was against him; the failure of that audacious enterprise had made him doubtful of himself, and he feared to expose himself again to the resentment of the States of Holland. The antagonism of the two Princesses could not fail also to discourage him. The Princess Dowager, whose daughter he afterwards married, began by repulsing his offers of service. 'I have been twice to court,' he writes to one of his correspondents, 'to see if her Highness had need of me, or wished to make use of me, but she has never done me that honour.' She believed him to be incompetent for the offices to which he might have aspired, and added 'that in case he should ever attain them she should prefer to quit the country.' The Princess Royal was even less well-disposed towards him; her whole confidence was given to his declared enemy, Louis of Nassau, lord of Beverwaert, a natural son of Maurice of Orange. Count William Frederick's conduct provoked this hostility. Immediately after the death of William II. he had got himself appointed Stadtholder of Groningen, instead of seeing this part of his paternal inheritance transferred to the young Prince of Orange, and he had even attempted to obtain the stadtholdership of Overijssel. The two Princesses consequently looked upon him as a champion rather to be feared than trusted for the young Prince, and dreaded lest under the cloak of a protector he might secretly become his rival.

His cousin, Prince John Maurice of Nassau-Siegen, godson

of Maurice of Orange, and through his father John the Young¹ equally descended from William I., had no temptation to grasp at the enjoyment of power by violent means. He was now lieutenant-general of cavalry and governor of Wesel, and had at the age of sixteen acquired military renown, which he had since brilliantly justified. He had been entrusted by the India Company with the government of Brazil, and had during a period of seven years rendered eminent services to the republic both by conquest and administration, so that to him the colony was indebted for a brief prosperity. For the last ten years now he had been again living at the Hague, and had there built for himself, amidst gardens which formed the chief ornament of the town, the splendid palace which bears his name, and has since become the habitation of the Museum. He was in correspondence with all the learned men of the day, and occupied his leisure in the composition of works on natural history which are still justly valued. In 1644 the office of Stadtholder of the Rhenish provinces was committed to him by the Elector of Brandenburg, who had known him in his youth at the University of Cleves. His proved valour, his affability, and the conciliatory temper which, in the opinion of a contemporary, 'caused him readily to accept the view of any one who spoke to him, without preventing his pursuing his aims as adroitly as any man living,' might well have conduced to his popularity. But his commission from a foreign potentate kept him at a distance from the territory of the republic, made him an object of suspicion, and damaged his credit. His only anxiety, however, was to secure the favour of the dominant party. A few days after William's death he presented himself to the States-General to declare to them 'that he was a good and loyal servant of the republic, and to beg that they would so consider him.' He cherished the hope of being called upon, rather than his cousin, the Count of Nassau, to succeed William as captain-general, and was careful to do nothing that might compromise his interests.

Whilst the House of Orange thus offered to the world the

¹ John the Young was the youngest son of John the Old, brother of William I.

spectacle of its divisions, the republican party, firmly knit together and boldly led, was profiting eagerly by circumstances so favourable to the foundation of a new government. The religious pomp and public rejoicings which celebrated the baptism of the young Prince, the honours which the deputies of the States-General, and of the States and principal cities of Holland, vied in offering to him, were but hollow testimonies of dynastic loyalty. Measures had none the less been concerted beforehand to profit by the infant's minority, and not to leave to him as his hereditary right the government of the republic under the power of a regent.

Three days after the death of William II., the former deputies, whom he had treated as state prisoners and deprived of all their offices, were recalled to take their seats in the Assembly. At the same time the provincial Town Councils assumed the power of nominating their own magistrates, which had almost always been left to the pleasure of the Stadtholder, and thus obtained the full enjoyment of municipal freedom. The States of Holland, on their side, grasped the authority hitherto exercised in their province by the Prince of Orange, and claimed successively all the rights of sovereignty. The States of Zealand, notwithstanding the loyalty which they had always preserved towards the House of Orange, exhibited the same eagerness to free themselves from all subjection, by abolishing the dignity of premier noble which had given to the ancestors of the Prince the right of appointing a substitute to represent the whole body of the nobles, and to preside over their deliberations. Thus, before declaring the stadtholdership vacant, the office was deprived of its prerogatives.

To complete this transformation of the government, the States of Holland took the initiative in summoning to the Hague a great assembly of the Confederation, which met at the beginning of the year 1651. They were resolved to take the leading part, and accordingly carefully prepared the programme of all the propositions which they submitted to it; and, to ensure them a favourable reception, they sent deputations to the different provinces composed of the best accredited

representatives of their policy. The congress was called upon to decide between two forms of constitution. The question was whether the United Provinces should be a republic governed by the States-General, or whether the government should belong to the States of each province, with only a reservation in favour of the obligations imposed by the Act of Union. Was each province to be sovereign in itself, or subject to the federal power? Such was the problem, the political importance of which was even greater than the rivalries of the Orange and republican parties.

Holland was the province most interested in this great debate. The republic was maintained principally by her resources, more than half the expenses of the Confederation were borne by her, and even in the sixteenth century she had been described by a French ambassador as 'the best part of the equipment, the rest being merely secondary.' She had the right of appointing the ambassadors and ministers who represented the republic at the courts of France, Sweden, and Germany.¹ And she shared also, by the appointment of one of her deputies, in all extraordinary embassies. Having already this advantage over all the other provinces, Holland could not submit to the supremacy of the States-General, which would reduce her to the level of the other members of the Union, and would leave her the disposal of only one vote in their deliberations. She feared that their power, which had already been turned against her by the Stadtholders Maurice and William II., might become the means of enslaving her. She desired, therefore, to leave in their hands only strictly defined powers, that her independence might be secure from any attack. The condition of success for this policy was the abolition, or at least the vacancy of the stadtholdership, which, combined with the offices of Admiral and Captain-General, had concentrated in the hands of the Princes of Orange all the executive power of the Confederation, without which the States-General would be reduced to impotence. It was for Holland then to bring round to her own views the other pro-

¹ The States-General maintained ordinary embassies only in France and England; Zealand had the right of appointing to the English embassy.

vinces who had contrary interests to defend. It was for this purpose that she had convened a solemn meeting of all the deputies. The great hall of the court of the old Counts of Holland, which still remains intact in the old palace of Binnendof, was prepared for their reception. It was decorated with all the banners won from Spain during the war of independence. Three hundred members were here assembled, and the States of Holland, more effectually to secure their own preponderance, sat in a body. The session was opened by their Grand Pensionary, Jacob Cats, in a speech which declared the necessity of their convocation, and which placed before them for immediate discussion the most urgent questions concerning the maintenance of the Union of Utrecht and the command of the federal army.

The maintenance of the Union of Utrecht seemed to demand the continuance of the stadtholdership in all the provinces, so that the Stadtholders might continue to act as arbitrators in all differences, and might remain the guardians of a good understanding between the confederates. But Holland vigorously maintained the right of each province to govern itself with or without a Stadtholder, and made known, for her part, the irrevocable determination to dispense with the stadtholdership of an infant. This declaration even did not appear sufficient. Desiring to prevent the Stadtholder chosen by any of the other provinces from taking any active part in the internal affairs of the republic, and especially interested in avoiding any intervention from Count William Frederick of Nassau in his capacity of Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, the deputies of Holland secured the passing of a resolution that the office of arbitrator in all disputes between the confederates should belong to the deputies of those provinces that were not interested in the difference. Henceforth, whether the stadtholdership were retained or abolished by the other provinces, it could no longer cause any uneasiness to Holland.

To make her security complete, there remained only to provide against the military power which had always belonged to the Admiral and Captain-General of the Union, who was

appointed by the States-General. She feared the use which might be made of these powers to her detriment, and the still recent recollection of the coup d'état of the last Stadtholder quickened her anxiety. There was no one, indeed, but the young son of William II. who could be chosen for these offices, and it was equally certain that during his minority his place would be filled by the Count of Nassau, who had incurred the enmity of Holland by his expedition against Amsterdam. Holland, therefore, desired only to retain the command of major-general, which was filled by the Count of Brederode, a member of the Provincial Assembly, who since the death of William II. had joined the republican party. In order to prevent any other appointment, she put forward the objections both of the tender age of the young Prince, which made it impossible for him to exercise any military command, and of the peace concluded with Spain, which allowed the republic to dispense without danger with a commander-in-chief.¹ Notwithstanding the resistance of the deputies of Friesland, the other provinces recognised the impossibility of imposing their choice upon Holland without provoking a breach of the Union; and contenting themselves with leaving the supreme command in reserve for the young heir of the House of Orange, they renounced for the present the appointment of an admiral and captain-general. The provincial States shared henceforth with the States-General the command of the federal army; they took into their own hands, not merely the nomination to all commissions and the appointment of commandants of fortresses, but also the issuing of marching orders called *patents*, to which they reserved the right of sanction whenever any troops other than those of their own contingent should be summoned into their territory.² The military power was thus divided and

¹ The States-General continued to dispose of appointments to the staff. The provincial States reserved to themselves the appointment of colonels, captains, and lieutenants in the regiments and companies composing their own contingent.

² The recollection of the use which William II. had made of his right of issuing patents when he was preparing his coup d'état, caused Holland to insist upon a multiplication of precautions to prevent any abuse. This important prerogative of the Stadtholders was henceforth to be exercised by the States-General, but subject to the preliminary approval of the provincial States.

lessened. It might be found insufficient in time of war, but in time of peace it would no longer be dangerous to internal freedom.

Thus protected for the future against all violence, Holland had only to obtain reparation for the past by inducing the other provinces to annul the resolutions they had passed favourable to the late Stadtholder's enterprise. She was quick to seize the first opportunity which presented itself to obtain this satisfaction. The Grand Pensionary of Holland, Cats, had received from the late Stadtholder a sealed paper, intended to justify the imprisonment of the deputies and the attempt against Amsterdam. The Assembly of the States had left it in his hands. But on the eve of resigning his office he thought himself bound to give up this document, and the majority of the deputies demanded that it should be read. Their indignation was soon aroused, and, indeed, seemed justified by the audacity with which William appealed in defence of his conduct to the violence offered to Olden Barneveldt in the name of the States-General thirty-one years previously, by the Stadtholder Maurice. The States of Holland lost no time in opposing to this memorandum a solemn refutation in which they gave free expression to their just resentment. While the towns, whose deputies had been arrested, certified their innocence and restored them to the exercise of their municipal offices, the States, notwithstanding the opposition of the deputies of Leyden, declared that 'Messrs. Jacob de Witt, de Waal, Ruyl, Duyst van Voorhout, Keyser, and Stellingwerf, as well as the two brothers Cornelius and Andrew Bicker, burgomasters of Amsterdam, had only obeyed the orders of their lawful sovereigns, and the promptings of the zeal and loyalty due to their country.' To this declaration they added a vote of 5,000 florins, to compensate the city of Amsterdam for the expenses incurred in resisting the attack of William II.

They at the same time boldly assumed the offensive, and rather from a well-calculated policy than from any eagerness for reprisals, instituted proceedings against the advisers and accomplices of William's attempt, and in particular against Aerssen van Sommelsdyck, colonel of horse and a member of

their assembly, who had executed the first orders of the Stadtholder. They were the more disposed to act with rigour towards him, that they could not forget the part taken by his father, who had been one of the principal councillors of Prince Maurice of Orange, in the condemnation and execution of Barneveldt. The deputies of Friesland, foreseeing the danger to which these proceedings exposed their Stadtholder, William of Nassau, who had taken an equal share in the coup d'état, urged the States-General to propose to the States of Holland a general amnesty, accompanied by the annulling of the resolutions which had given offence. The deputies of the other provinces were readily disposed to accord a satisfaction which had no appearance of being forced upon them, and which might become a pledge of public peace. The States of Holland for their part consented to drop the legal proceedings already commenced against Sommelsdyck, on condition that he should for the present cease to take his seat in the Assembly of the States;¹ and, proud of the honourable reparation offered to them, were easily persuaded to forego a useless revenge. The disavowal of past proceedings might well suffice them.

The Assembly of the States-General, known as their High Mightinesses, was in future under their dominion. Having no longer either a civil or a military chief to enforce obedience from the different provinces, it was deprived of the preponderating power previously exercised by it. It was composed of deputies from the seven provinces, to each of which the presidency fell in weekly rotation. These deputies were paid by the States of their province.² They generally numbered thirty or forty, but their votes were only counted by provinces.³ The Assembly sat permanently. It fixed the

¹ Sommelsdyck sat in the Assembly as a member of the nobility.

² The deputies of Holland to the States-General received four florins daily; those of the other provinces, who had some distance to travel to the Hague, received six florins.

³ The members of the States-General were delegated from the States of their respective provinces, sometimes for three, sometimes for six years, according to the particular constitution of the province. Some sat during their whole term of office, as the Councillor Pensionary of Holland. Others, like the deputy of the nobles of Holland, and the members for Utrecht and Zealand, held their seats for life.

contingent of the army and the fleet, and divided all common expenses amongst the provinces. It had the right of making treaties, of deliberating and voting upon questions of peace and war, and upon the measures, both financial and military, which concerned the defence of the country. It received foreign ambassadors, and treated with them and with their sovereigns in the name of the republic. The appointment of general officers in the army, and of the principal commanders in the fleet, belonged to it. The superintendence of the colonies and the government of conquered and annexed territories, such as Brabant, which were called countries of the Generality, formed also a part of its functions. Its principal officer was a Secretary-General, who was assisted by a Treasurer and a Receiver-General. The Secretary of the States-General, who held his appointment for life, had charge of all correspondence, drew up and prepared resolutions, had the right to be present at all committees and at conferences with foreign ambassadors, received the despatches of the ministers representing the republic abroad, and thus shared with the Grand Pensionary of Holland in the direction of the government.

The powers of the Federal Assembly, extended as they were, were yet subordinate to the authority of the States of each province. The States-General represented the sovereignty of the members of the Union, but were not themselves sovereign. The States of each province issued instructions to their delegates to the States-General. Their unanimous consent was necessary to give the force of law to the resolutions of the Federal Assembly. In reality the States-General exercised no authority, even nominally, in the different provinces, and they could not publish their resolutions without the assistance of the provincial States, to whom they were forced to appeal. The confederation of the United Provinces was, like that of Switzerland, only with the federal bond more closely drawn, a league of States which, while combining a part of their resources for mutual protection, none the less preserved intact their internal independence.

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Beside the States-General was the Council of State, which

in the first days of the republic had presided over the direction of both the home and foreign affairs of the confederation, but was now reduced to scanty powers, which the General Assembly had recently still further restricted. It was composed of twelve members, distributed among the provinces according to their importance;¹ each member voted for himself, and questions were decided by a majority of votes. The Council of State was assisted by a secretary, who in reality took the lead in it. The Stadtholders of the various provinces had seats in it, as had also the officers of the States-General, such as the Secretary, the Treasurer-General, and the Receiver-General. Its principal functions consisted in jurisdiction over the countries known as the Generalities, in financial administration which was also controlled by a court of audit, and superintendence of military matters. The Council of State shared with the States-General the supreme command and direction of all warlike operations, and was more especially charged with the administration of the army. It concerned itself with the levy of troops, with their armament and discipline, and with the maintenance and care of the fortification and frontier places. It drew up each year a detailed report of the common expenses, known as the war report, or the budget of the confederation, and which was laid before it by the Treasurer-General. It decreed the distribution and employment of the revenue, but had no share in the imposition or levying of the taxes,² which had been arranged between themselves by the provinces in an Act passed in 1612,³ and the proceeds of which each province remitted directly to the Receiver-General. The Council of State had no other function, therefore, than to assist the States-General, of which it was in some sort an auxiliary.

¹ Of these twelve councillors, three belonged to Holland, two to Guelders, two to Zealand, two to Friesland, one to the province of Utrecht, one to Oberyssel, and one to Groningen. They were generally elected for three years, but some sat for life.

² The right of levying taxes only belonged to the Council of State in the countries of the Generality.

³ The division of this contribution was approximatively thus:—Holland paid 58 per cent.; Friesland, 11; Zealand, 9; Guelders, 5; Utrecht, 5; Groningen, 5; Overyssel, 3; the countries of the Generality, 1.

The States-General had only a very limited share in the administration of the maritime affairs on which the power of the republic depended. This was in the hands of the admiralties, and was divided between five boards—the admiralty board of the Meuse, which sat at Rotterdam; that of Amsterdam, of North Holland, of Zealand, and of Friesland. These boards, of which three belonged to Holland, were composed of deputies elected by the provincial States or by the municipal councils of the towns having a right to be represented on the board. The preponderance of votes was secured to the deputies of the province where the board sat. This organisation gave a just supremacy to Holland, since she contributed five-sixths of the equipment and armament of the fleet, one-third of which was borne by the city of Amsterdam alone. In time of peace the admiralty of Friesland was reduced to a single vessel, and that of Zealand to only eighteen, while the admiralty boards of Holland could send to sea a hundred and six vessels, North Holland being bound to equip sixteen, Rotterdam twenty, and Amsterdam seventy, of which the smallest was armed with fifty guns. The admiralties kept up each their own squadron, of which the expenses were defrayed by the harbour dues on incoming and outgoing merchant ships,¹ and by the extraordinary subsidies of the States-General. They appointed the lieutenants of their ships, and submitted the names of the captains to the States-General, and each in its own district exercised maritime jurisdiction. As to the lieutenant-admirals, vice-admirals, and rear-admirals of each squadron, they were appointed by the States of the province from which each admiralty depended. The States-General could only appoint to the command in chief of the fleet, and even to this the States of Holland had the right of proposing a candidate. It belonged to them, however, to fix the increase or decrease, as well as the use of the naval forces of the republic, which in time of peace mustered a hundred and fifteen ships of war.

Immediately after the Great Assembly of 1651, the provincial States, who had gradually freed themselves from all

¹ In 1660 and in 1668 these produced at Amsterdam two millions of florins.

dependence on the States-General and the Council of State, and were now for the most part, excepting Friesland and Groningen, untrammelled by the supreme authority of any Stadtholder, and not even subject to the control of a commander-in-chief, became thus possessed of the entire government of the provinces. Their administrative, financial, and military power was completed by the judicial authority; the appointment of the judges was now in their hands, and justice was delivered in their own name, in default of a Stadtholder, without any intervention from the States-General. Some provinces, like Holland and Zeeland, might have common tribunals, but none depended upon a federal court. Even the settlement of disputes between the provinces was withdrawn from the functions of the States-General. According to the decision of the Great Assembly of 1651, these differences were in future to be reconciled by means of an almost voluntary arbitration; and before the Assembly dispersed, every precaution had been taken, in case of dissension even between one province and all the others, to protect the rights of the minority against the will of the majority.

Thus left to themselves, but incapable of maintaining themselves single-handed, and no longer able to invoke the authority of the States-General as a protection against the domination of Holland, the different provinces must needs fall into dependence upon Holland, and would surely be brought under her ascendancy in spite of the resistance of Zeeland, which could alone though unsuccessfully attempt rivalry with her. Some years later, Huybert, the Pensionary of Zeeland, wrote accordingly, 'Our ancestors had reason to foresee and fear, while they were still so fortunate as to possess a chief of the State, that in default of such a chief that province would attempt to make herself the centre of all, and to exercise supremacy over the confederates, as we see now has been done.'

Freed from the counterbalancing power of the Stadtholder, Holland to a great extent absorbed the federal power, and was the gainer by all that that power lost. The supremacy to which she aspired was justified not merely by the contingent

of men, money, and ships, which she furnished to the confederation. The division of all the powers of government between the States-General, the Council of State, and the provincial States, made the guardianship of Holland the more necessary that by it alone could the dissolution of the republic be averted.

The States of Holland then were called upon to fill the vacancy of the stadtholdership. This assembly, destined henceforward to be the principal instrument of government of the republic, was composed partly of nobles and partly of deputies from the towns.

Of the nobles, among whom were counted all holders of fiefs, only ten had seats in the States. They were appointed for life, and recruited by election among themselves, and in later times obtained the privilege of hereditary succession. As members by right of birth they took part in all assemblies and all councils, both of the province and of the confederation, and had besides obtained for themselves the sole right to several offices, both on the admiralty boards and in the courts of justice. Their political authority, however, was very limited. They had but one vote in the States, and could not therefore balance the preponderating power of the deputies of the towns.

Eighteen towns had the right of being represented in the States. The deputies whom they sent and whose expenses they paid were appointed by the councils or senates, from whom the delegates held their powers and received their instructions. They were reappointed every three years, and had almost always the Pensionary of the town as their official speaker. Each town having but one vote, whatever number of deputies might be sent, the assembly consisted of only nineteen voters, although the numbers were from 100 to 150.

The States of Holland, known under the name of Noble and Great Mightinesses, sat four times a year—in February, June, September, and November. They deliberated upon all matters concerning the province of Holland, or having reference to the numerous offices of which they had the disposal.

Proposals affecting the confederation were also submitted to them, their delegates to the States-General¹ being bound to consult them before any vote of importance was taken. Their decisions were generally settled by committees formed by the deputies of the principal towns. A bare majority was not always sufficient; unanimity of votes was required in questions of taxation, of peace or war, or of the internal government of the province. Each deputation, in fact, represented a free town, and could not bind any other by its vote. 'It is a fault in those States that there should be so many members,' we find in a diplomatic correspondence of the day; 'every member has a head of his own, but all the heads must be under one hat before anything can be done.' In point of fact, however, some skilfully contrived compromise was generally found to smooth away any difference of opinion, and the minority desisted from offering any obstacle to the final adoption of important measures. The common consent might not be given immediately, but it was hardly ever really refused.

The Grand Pensionary was the minister of the States of Holland. He was appointed for five years, and represented them in the States-General. They had besides the services of the Councillor deputies (*gecommitteerde raden*). The board of Councillor deputies consisted of ten members, one of whom was appointed for life by the nobles, and was president, and the others sent for two or three years by the chief towns of the province, and in regular rotation by the smaller towns. The authority enjoyed by the Council of State in the confederation was very much the same as that exercised by the Councillor deputies in the provinces. They had the administration of the finances, decided questions of taxation, directed military matters, and had the right to appoint all officers below the rank of captain. It was their business to convoke

¹ The deputies sent by the States of Holland to the States-General were— one deputy from the nobles, appointed for life, two deputies sent alternately from the eight chief towns, and one from North Holland, who were all three appointed for three years, without counting the Grand Pensionary, who sat for the term of his office.

the States of Holland, whenever their assembly was to be summoned at other times than its regular sessions, to prepare all measures, and to secure their execution. They sat in a body in the assembly, and had seats also in the States-General. Two Councillor deputies were always on duty there, besides other members of the States of Holland.

The various administrative boards of the province were appointed by the States, and depended upon them. These were—the three admiralty boards; the six boards of Counts or judges of the dykes (*dyckgraaf*), with their councillors (*heemraden*), who were entrusted with the superintendence of the waters, roads, and bridges in their district, and with the levying of the dues for their maintenance; the board of curators of the University of Leyden, the courts of audit, and of public domains, the two courts of justice, the Provincial Court and the Grand Council, which exercised jurisdiction in Holland and Zealand. The Provincial Court, or Court of Justice properly so called, had supreme authority in criminal cases, and heard civil suits in the first instance; the Grand Council sat on appeals in civil cases, and performed also the functions of a court of error.

The authority of the States was recognised as supreme by all these boards, and was inferior only to the municipal councils, to whom, through their election of its members, the Assembly of the States was subordinated. To confirm their supremacy more effectually, however, they resolved that in future the magistrates and governors of all towns in the province should take an oath of allegiance to them. The domination which the States of Holland now proposed to extend equally over the other provinces was the more easily imposed by them, that the whole government of the confederation was in some sort concentrated round their assembly. By establishing their seat at the Hague, the States-General had made that town the metropolis of the United Provinces. It had been formerly a hunting-seat of the Counts of Holland, and seemed marked out for a capital by the traditions of luxury and taste which had taken root in it, and by the beauty lent to it by its canals, its stately avenues and verdant lawns, its ancient

forest, and the near neighbourhood of the sea, which made Scheveningen the favourite walk of its inhabitants. In its capacity of a federal city it was not represented in the States, and was directly subject to them. The commissioners of the Hague, when summoned to speak in their assembly, gave their opinions standing and with uncovered heads, and the city enjoyed none of the attributes of sovereignty. Open on all sides, having neither fortified gates nor drawbridges, nor even chains drawn across the roadway to prevent people going in or out at any hour, the Hague seemed formed to be the seat of a pacific and liberal government founded upon public confidence.

The old palace or court of the Counts of Holland, the hereditary dwelling of the Princes of Orange, which served as a hall of assembly for the provincial States, and in which sat the courts of law, was also the meeting-place for the States-General, and for the Council of State. The States of Holland were thus both the guardians and the host of the federal power. The palace was built in the form of a square, and enclosed between its wings a large inner court (the Binnenhof) some fifty paces long, in which was a covered hall where the great assemblies of the confederation were held. It was built at the end of the sixteenth century, in the severe style of the architecture of that period, and with its brick walls, which remain perfect to this day, it recalls the ancient majesty of the traditions of the republic, preserves the noble and tragic memories of past centuries, and seems the very dwelling of history. The south wing rises abruptly from the great basin or fishpond where, round a green island where swans disport themselves, stretches a sheet of water to the very foot of the walls, opposite to which is a terrace shaded by fine trees (the Vijverberg), which skirts the edge and forms a sort of quay. It was in this part of the building that the States-General and the States of Holland found themselves neighbours in almost adjoining halls. The States-General sat in the hall now known as the Hall of Truce. The hall which the States of Holland occupied a few years later, and which is now used for the

upper chamber of the kingdom of the Netherlands, added by its gorgeous decorations to the prestige of their power.

It was situated on the first floor, surmounted by a dome, and had five windows looking to the water. The walls were hung with tapestry representing the inhabitants of different countries. At each extremity was a marble chimney-piece, enriched with sculpture and paintings. In the middle was an enclosure or reserved space, surrounded by a balustrade. Within this space sat the nobles and the deputies of the eighteen towns that had the right to vote. In the centre the nobles occupied the first table. At the end of this table, facing the west fireplace, was placed the Grand Pensionary's chair. Behind this chair were the benches for the councillor deputies. Next to them a second table belonged to the deputies of Dordrecht, Haarlem, Delft, Leyden, and Brill. Opposite sat the deputies of North Holland. Above the benches of the councillor deputies three other tables were arranged in graduated steps: the first, for the deputies of Amsterdam; the second, for those of Gouda and Rotterdam; the highest, for the deputies of Gorcum, Schiedam, and Schoonhoen. Each table had a raised desk for the pensionary of the town, whose seat faced those of the deputies to whom he was attached. Outside the enclosure, on either hand of the western fireplace, were the seats of the secretaries of each town. A staircase communicated from this room with that in which sat the councillor deputies on the ground-floor, close to the private room of the Grand Pensionary.

Within these walls the political freedom of modern times was to take a bold and glorious flight. England, which had already enjoyed parliamentary government, had now passed from those attempts at absolute power for which Charles I. paid so heavy a penalty, to the rude and sullen dominion imposed upon the English nation for ten years by the strong hand of Cromwell. France, dazzled by the budding fortunes of Louis XIV., disgusted with the intrigues and weary of the troubles of the Fronde, was disposed to seek only for the glories of arms or genius, and to allow herself to be governed rather than to bear the fatigue of governing herself.

What a contrast to these two countries, of which one was on the verge of a revolution little favourable to freedom, and the other becoming accustomed to subjection for the sake of military glory, are the deliberative and sovereign assemblies of the States-General and the States of Holland! They recall the best days of the ancient republic, only with slavery omitted and Christianity added to them. With them government is neither the privilege of one man nor the right of the multitude; it is divided amongst all those who seem most capable of exercising it, and who have passed through a preliminary apprenticeship in the councils of their native towns. Power belongs thus to citizens who devote their time and labour to public business almost without recompense, realising the idea of a cheap government. They hold their offices from no popular election, but by choice amongst themselves, and are subject to the control of a free press, which, without indulging in license, serves as a protection to all interests and a safeguard against all injustice. If they enjoy political privileges, these are justified by the good administration of town and province, the honest management of the finances, the economical use of public money; they are the enemies of all unnecessary wars, but are at the same time jealous for the greatness of their country; heroes when the need arises, but without arrogance or pomp; honest servants of a government founded upon the respect due to the dignity of man, and pursuing without fear of obstacle the glorious design of raising and maintaining a republic to an equality with the greatest monarchies.

CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY LIFE OF A GREAT MAN—EDUCATION—PRIVATE LIFE,
AND COMMENCEMENT OF JOHN DE WITT'S POLITICAL CAREER.

A great minister necessary to Holland—Birth of John de Witt and his brother Cornelius—Their family—Their education—Their conduct during their father's captivity—John de Witt's entry into public life—He is appointed pensionary of Dordrecht—He is sent to the Grand Assembly of 1651—His report on the coup d'état—His deputations in Zealand—His provisional appointment as Grand Pensionary—His definite nomination—His private correspondence—His relations to his family and in society—His marriage with Wendela Bicker—His political friends, Nieupoort, Van Beuningen, and Beverningh—His official functions—His character—His portrait.

CALLED upon by the vacancy in the stadtholdership to the government of the United Provinces, without any legal power of enforcing obedience, Holland required a statesman who could secure this political supremacy and use it for her benefit. The nomination of John de Witt as Grand Pensionary placed at her service one of the youngest members of the assembly. She made him Prime Minister, and he, by his superiority of talent as well as of character, made her mistress of the confederation. The preponderance of his authority enabled him to combine in one compact form all the forces of the Dutch oligarchy, so as to give them a considerable share in the government, and made him in some measure an absolute president of the republic. The origin and traditions of John de Witt's family had prepared him for that great part which he was to play for twenty years. His first beginnings marked the way he was about to tread. They explain his whole life. It was that of a great and good man serving a grand cause to which he linked his own fate, and it

exhibits in all their brightness those public and private virtues which do honour to human nature.

John de Witt, born at Dordrecht on September 24, 1625, between one and two o'clock in the afternoon, was the youngest of the four children of Jacob de Witt and Anna van de Corput. His elder brother, Cornelius, who shared in the vicissitudes of his career, was older than he by two years; but although he eventually reached a stature above the common, he was born so feeble and delicate that he owed his life to the extraordinary heat on the day of his birth.

John and Cornelius de Witt had two sisters, older than themselves. The elder, Johanna or Jeanne, was married to Jacob Bevern de Zwynrecht, who belonged to one of the principal families in Dordrecht. The younger, Maria, married Diederich or Theodore Hœufft, whose uncle, John Hœufft, had settled in France for the purpose of reclaiming the marshes in the neighbourhood of La Rochelle, and who himself succeeded by inheritance from one of his brothers to the French property of Fontaine Péreuse, whence he took his title.¹

The paternal family of John de Witt, which had always had its residence at Dordrecht, counted eleven known generations before him. It dated back to the later years of the thirteenth century, and had twice changed the spelling of the original name Die Witte (White), to De Witte in the fifteenth century, and in the sixteenth century to De Witt.² Their hereditary arms represented two greyhounds pursuing a hare.

From the third generation to the fifteenth century they exercised municipal functions, and took their place among the notabilities of the town of Dordrecht, to which they furnished in turn councillors, sheriffs, and a burgomaster. They included amongst their number Catholic priests, priors of monasteries, and nuns, one of whom belonged to the Convent

¹ See *Almanach de Hollande*, 1850, p. 91: 'Letters from John de Witt to Diederich Hœufft,' published by M. Lotsij, formerly Minister for Naval Affairs, and a descendant of Hœufft on his mother's side.

² These details and a few of those which follow are mentioned in a recent work by Mr. Geddes, *The Administration of John de Witt*, The Hague, 1879.

of St. Agnes established in the town. In the library of Dordrecht a missal has been preserved which was presented to it at the commencement of the fifteenth century by one of John de Witt's oldest ancestors. His grandfather, Cornelius de Witt, contemporary of William the Silent, was the first of his family who professed the reformed religion. After having received at different municipal elections the testimony of the confidence of his fellow-citizens, he was called upon in turns to sit in the Assembly of the States of Holland and in that of the States-General. His father, Jacob de Witt, who was born on January 10, 1674, surviving his glorious sons for more than a year, had three sisters and two brothers, of whom one, Andrew, exercised *ad interim* for several months the office of Grand Pensionary of the province after the death of Olden Barneveldt, and became eventually one of the judges of Holland. 5/

Jacob de Witt had from his youth up formed one of the Council of Dordrecht. After having been a long time sheriff, he was made burgomaster and six times re-elected. He was collector of taxes, superintendent of dykes, and custodian of the town library, and he further distinguished himself in foreign negotiations and in the deliberations of the Assembly. Designated as a member of the embassies to Denmark and Sweden, he received from Queen Christina a gold medal bearing on one side the royal portrait embellished with diamonds, and on the other the arms of the kingdom. On his return to Holland, Jacob de Witt was sent as deputy from Dordrecht to the Provincial States, represented them in the States-General, and was charged with fresh negotiations to the Hanseatic towns. Austere in his manners, and becoming as age advanced somewhat misanthropical, shunning rather than seeking society, having a great inclination for solitude, preferring to remain in the contemplation of his religious faith, he had no luxurious habits, and lived at Dordrecht with the simplest of households. Andrew Colvius, one of his contemporaries, called him 'the glory of his native town.' His portrait, painted in the great Rembrandt style, represents him as an old man dressed in black, with his head erect, having

thin hands with long taper fingers, a stern look, and a proud and stiff bearing.

His wife, Anna van de Corput, born April 24, 1600, and married at sixteen, belonged to a great Brabant family.

She was the daughter of the Sheriff of Bréda. Her mother, Maria Büysen, had married a second time John Bereck, secretary to the town of Dordrecht, and ambassador in England and at Venice. She had four sisters. One, Maria, who lived to a very advanced age, and with whom John de Witt always kept up a very intimate correspondence, had married Van der Meer, one of the judges of Holland; the second, Gertrude, was the wife of Cornelius van Sypsteyn, a member of the Chapter of Utrecht and one of John de Witt's early patrons; the third, Cornelia, married Quentyn de Veer, who was a bailiff at the Hague; lastly, the youngest, Antonia, was married to Anthony Vivien, whose son was the faithful companion of John de Witt through good and evil fortune.

Anna van de Corput was called 'pious and strict' by the friends of the family; her portrait represents her still young, in a rich dress, one of those handsome Flemish matrons whose type has been immortalised by the great painters of the time. She had taken the greatest pains with the education of her children.

She encouraged their early studies, and if she did not live to enjoy their greatness, had at least the merit of having paved the way for it. She died January 22, 1645, at the age of forty-five, far from her husband, who was detained in the service of the republic on an embassy to Sweden, and was buried in St. Catherine's Chapel in the Cathedral of Dordrecht.

Jacob de Witt, on hearing of the death of his wife, 'with a trembling in all his limbs,' as he writes in his official notes, addressed to his colleagues the following letter, which gives testimony to his religious sentiments:—'Yesterday I opened my despatches and learned with much disturbance that it had pleased the Almighty God to call my dear and worthy wife to His heavenly kingdom. Although I have been brought up to believe, and well understand, that all events following on the

will of God should be received and accepted as good, I am, nevertheless, beyond measure afflicted, so much so that I have resolved to start immediately for Colmar, that I may have a few days in which to settle about my mourning, and to try and calm my grief.'

The family mode of life had, from their earliest years, familiarised the sons of the Dordrecht burgomaster with public affairs; it had also taught them to court those intellectual pleasures for which Dutch society had great taste. Jacob de Witt, in his capacity of curator of the Latin school at Dordrecht, collected at his house the pastors, professors, learned men, and writers of the town.¹

Anna van de Corput was herself on intimate terms with many distinguished pastors of the Calvinist Church, with the celebrated doctor and professor Beverwijck, whose Latin and Greek verses in celebration of his domestic joys and sorrows have been reproduced in the memoirs of the times. She held her place worthily in the midst of her illustrious contemporaries, who were ardently devoted to the culture of literature, and who, according to the panegyrics of the times, 'made the town of Dordrecht the throne of the Muses, as well as the paradise of the Arts.' There were Anna von Blockland, to whom Beverwijck dedicated his work entitled 'The Excellence of the Female Sex;' Maria de Witt, who at sixteen carried on a correspondence in verse with Cats; Anna Maria van Schurman, who joined to the culture of the arts a knowledge of dead and living languages;² Margaretha Godewyck, the most celebrated of all, who, versed in the profoundest studies of philosophy and astronomy, united to them the gifts of imagination, writing Latin, French, and Dutch poetry, and was surnamed, 'the precious pearl in the virginal crown of the town.'

The statesmen of Dordrecht, John van de Corput (John de Witt's maternal grandfather), John Bereck (the second husband of his maternal grandmother), Ruysch, Halewyn, Slingelandt, used to meet in this learned company, whose Mæcenas,

¹ Schotel, *Oud Hollandsch Huisgezin*. Id. *Geschiedkundige Letter*, 1840.

² Schotel, *Vie d'Anna Maria Van Schurman*, 1853.

Cornelius van Beveren, exercised his kindly hospitality in his abode at Develstein.¹ The most illustrious foreigners had for some time been attracted to Dordrecht by the prestige of their literary renown.

The municipal registers attest the passage of Guy Patin, of Montaigne, and of Descartes, who had acquired, through the solution of a geometrical problem, the friendship of Isaac Beeckman, the great mathematician and philosopher, and rector of the Latin School in the town.

John de Witt had thus been enabled from his childhood to profit in the intimacy of his family circle by its relations with a select society, which could not fail to assist in the early development of his mind. He had, like his brother Cornelius, begun his studies in the Latin School of Dordrecht, whose teachings enjoyed a justly acquired celebrity. Before the plague of 1635, which decimated masters and pupils, it was frequented by more than 600 scholars coming in great numbers from the different provinces of the Confederation, and even from France and Germany. When John de Witt entered the school in 1636, the curators had just solemnly inaugurated it as an 'Illustrious' or High School,² in order to stop the flight of the pupils, whom this contagious disease had caused to be recalled to their families. They instituted chairs for Natural Philosophy, Medicine and Surgery, Greek Literature and History, which they confided to the most learned professors, to whom they offered a salary of 200 florins.

Doctor Isaac Beeckman, who had fallen a victim to the plague, had been replaced, his successor being the pastor Gaspard Parduyn, beloved and respected by his pupils, with whom, according to a writer of the period, 'he used neither rod nor ferule.'

It was under his direction that John de Witt completed his studies. He began by learning the language and literature of his country: these were taught him by Peter Godewyck, who has left many verses written in honour of John de Witt's family, and afterwards dedicated to his distinguished pupil.

¹ Schotel, *De Illustre School te Dordrecht*, 1857, p. 75.

² *Idem*.

John Goris was his professor of history. He studied Greek and Latin with Abraham Beeckman, a brother of the former rector of the school. He joined to his knowledge of the dead languages that of English and especially of French, which he spoke and wrote with great facility. His flexible mind, his good memory and solid judgment, lent themselves to the most varied acquirements. By the pious care of his parents, his religious instruction had been intrusted to the pastor Peter Wassenburgh. John de Witt had been educated in the doctrines of the Reformed Church, to which his father and mother, who belonged to the Walloon sect founded by the Protestants of the Spanish Netherlands, were faithfully attached. He drew thence a deeply-rooted belief, which armed him all his life against weaknesses and temptations, and gives to his private and public letters a tone of gentle resignation. His piety was combined with great tolerance; far from showing any hostility towards Catholics, writes a contemporary ambassador, 'he seemed inclined to accord them the most perfect freedom in their religion.'

Moreover, the opinions of his masters and his family relations inclined him to follow the philosophy of Descartes, but the furious zeal of the pastors who combated it could not later pardon in John de Witt either his Cartesian doctrines or his principles of moderation, which they regarded as contrary to Protestant orthodoxy.

Having quitted the Latin School at sixteen, he was sent with his brother to the University of Leyden, where they were both entered on October 24, 1641.¹ They lived there with the professor of law Bernard van Schooten, who had formerly made his mark at the university in Friesland, and who, according to the testimony of a contemporary, enjoyed universal esteem for his personal qualities as well as in his capacity of learned man and teacher. The university course was divided into five faculties—namely, law, philosophy com-

¹ The record of 'Civium academicorum' of the University of Leyden makes John de Witt in 1641 eighteen years of age, and Cornelius de Witt twenty, whereas John was sixteen and Cornelius eighteen. Was this an intentional error to give John de Witt, by adding some years, the right of entrance to the University?

bined with science, theology, literature, and medicine. John de Witt for four years followed the private and public law classes, completing at the same time his mathematical studies which he had begun at the Latin School. The records of the University bear no trace of any degree having been taken by either of the brothers on leaving it, after the death of their mother, to go to France and England. The account of this excursion, unfortunately reduced to a mere list of stages and expenses, without any remarks, in no way resembles the interesting volume entitled 'The Journey of Two Young Dutchmen to Paris in 1657 and 1658,' recently published.

It has been preserved in a note-book of John de Witt's belonging to the family records. The two brothers, starting October 14, 1645, after having traversed the Spanish Netherlands and visited Antwerp, stopped for a fortnight at Paris, and then established themselves at Anger, whose University was famous in Europe.

They stayed there three months and took their degrees as Doctors of Law. Although there is no registry of the entrances to the university, which had been intermitted since 1636, John de Witt's note-book leaves no doubt as to this. It bears the following entry: 'To the Rector for our diploma, one hundred and two florins.' Having obtained their diploma, the two brothers, 'furnished with horses,' started for their tour of France. They travelled over the west and south of the kingdom, visiting Orleans, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Nismes, and Montpellier, where, 'finding some pleasant society,' they stayed for several weeks. Having reached Marseilles and Toulon, they then went to Lyons, and returning in October to Paris, remained there for some time. They did not leave till the spring of the following year, continued their journey to Brittany and Normandy, and embarked at Calais for England, where they only remained six weeks. They arrived just at the moment when Charles I. had been seized from the custody of the Parliamentary Commissioners, and taken to the head-quarters of the army to be given up to Cromwell. No trace of the impression such events must have made upon them is to be found in John de Witt's note-book. It merely

mentions that, after visiting the principal monuments in London, they travelled over the south-west of England, stopping at Bristol and Oxford, and that they were invited to join in several shooting-parties.

They ended their journey in company with the old ambassador of the States-General, Joachimi, who was on his way to the King, whom Fairfax had brought into the neighbourhood of London. After having been received by the Lord General and the Parliamentary Commissioners, who were in conference with Charles I., the ambassador had an audience with the King, at which, apparently, the two brothers were not present, no mention of it being made in John de Witt's note-book. A week later they quitted England, and returned to their family after an absence of about two years.

After having taken their oath as advocates in the Law Courts, they separated. Cornelius de Witt remained at Dordrecht, where he lived with his sister Maria Hœufft; and, although not absolutely indifferent to the many distractions of social life, he gave evidence of such sober tastes that his father got him appointed in the following year sheriff of the town. John de Witt, although retaining his municipal domicile at Dordrecht, settled himself at the Hague, where he worked under the direction of the retired lawyer Van den Anel. His first pleadings showed his powers of speech. His scientific tastes turned his mind towards mathematics, to which he gave up his leisure time during his years at the bar. The earliest letter to be found amongst his correspondence in the archives at the Hague is one written to him by his uncle, Anthony Vivien, to congratulate him on his interpretation of four geometrical problems according to Descartes' method. On the other hand, his travels had taught him to compare the situation of the other European States with those of his own country, and had thus prepared him for public life. His success at the bar, his varied knowledge, and his great aptitude in applying it, with his growing renown for wisdom and talent, seemed already to point him out for a great destiny. According to an account of the time, the jurisconsult Vermeulen, who had frequent intercourse with Jacob de Witt, had

been asked to examine his son John on the constitution of the republic, when he was barely eighteen, and he had shown much astonishment at finding in so young a man those brilliant and solid gifts of a political education which are generally the result of long study and an advanced age.

Exhorting him to continue thus, Vermeulen had predicted that he would make himself a name lasting to long future ages.¹

This serious employment of his early youth in no way deterred him from worldly pleasures or from efforts of imagination. Before being sent to the university he had eagerly joined in the dancing classes at Dordrecht, which were not spared the censures of the Protestant Consistory.² He habituated himself to declamation, and was often with his brother given the principal parts in the Latin and Dutch tragedies performed by the pupils of the Latin School. At the same time he accustomed himself to bodily exercises, and became particularly skilled at tennis. To the practice of dancing he joined the study of music, and was remarkable for his talent on the violin. He learned backgammon, chess, games of cards, and even conjuring and sleight-of-hand tricks. He could thus take his part in social amusements, and had learnt the art of pleasing in company, where he was much sought after.³ His letters to his sisters and their answers show the pains he took with his dress, asking them for ruffles, handkerchiefs, and boots, and taking charge, on his side, of all their household commissions, notably in the choice of a French nurse for his eldest sister's children. 'No one worked harder at his studies and business,' writes a contemporary; 'but neither was anyone more cheerful at meals or more amiable in his diversions.' His correspondence tells of the festivities in which he took part, and which were often given by his uncle Cornelius van Sypesteyn. He there met all his cousins, with other young men and girls of the same age. The poetical relaxa-

¹ *Duncaniana*, vol. iii., 1672. Royal Library at the Hague.

² Schotel, *Oud Hollandsch Huisgezin der zeventiende Eeuw*, 1868.

³ *Duncaniana*, vol. ii., 1672. *Historisch verhaal*, 1655-1672. See Bilderdyck, vol. x. p. 236.

tions in which John de Witt liked to join formed the principal amusement at the meetings. One of his contemporaries calls him the master of the seven liberal arts; another speaks of the success he would have had as a 'tuneful poet,' had he chosen to occupy himself with poetry. Anxious, no doubt, to obtain other approbation than that of his father's friends, he followed the example given him by those around him. He wrote for the 'Dordrecht Bazaar,' or 'Noah's Ark,' one of the literary productions of his native town, intended probably for young girls, some elegant lines, in which, however, lightness of touch is generally wanting. He used an easily recognised pseudonym; translating into Latin his name of De Witt, he signed himself *Candidus*. These attempts were followed by a more serious work—the translation into Dutch of Corneille's *Horace*.¹ John de Witt might have seen the great poet's tragedies acted in France during his travels. He had certainly heard them at the French theatre, which the Stadtholder William II. and his father Frederick Henry had established at the Hague. Nevertheless, as he dedicated his work under the name of 'Charles,' to the celebrated Amsterdam actor Charles van Gernnis, of whom no doubt he had taken lessons in declamation, and to whom he applied to get it printed, he probably preferred to remain unknown.

As he intended to enter public life, it was for his interest to respect the scruples of the presbytery of Dordrecht, which severely condemned the theatre, and scarcely tolerated a few representations at fair time. He therefore contented himself by putting his initials, J. J. Z. D. J.—that is to say, John, Jacob's Zoon (Jacob's son), Doctor of Law. The translation was, however, later attributed to him without dispute. The piece thus translated was often played at Amsterdam, and the first publication was followed by four other editions. One of these editions bears in full the name of John de Witt.

This simple designation, unaccompanied by any title, fixes the identity of the author, and forbids its being taken for that of an obscure namesake. However it may be, this trans-

¹ See Veegens, *Notice sur l'Horace de Corneille par de Witt*, and Schotel's *De illustre School te Dordrecht*, p. 77, and *Soirées tilbourgeoises*, p. 129.

lation does not add much to the fame of John de Witt, nor do much honour to his poetical genius. It merely serves to show his knowledge of the French language and literature.¹ Preceded by a high-flown and pretentious sonnet, it is mostly cold and colourless, and spoils the concise eloquence of the model by misplaced elaborations.² Nevertheless the lines run smoothly, there is no want of harmony in the rhythm, and when the author keeps to his text he renders the French lines in all their masculine energy. Some passages, such as Camille's imprecations, have preserved all their native beauty in the foreign language. This translation has, moreover, one merit, which is a sufficient recommendation; it was the first work of a young man of three and twenty.

John de Witt had no leisure to perfect himself in the art of poetry. Time equally failed him to acquire those merits as a writer which are generally wanting in his public and private correspondence. Ignorant of the art of polishing and adorning his style, he neglected the use of those refinements of expression and studied elegancies or classical quotations familiar to some of his contemporaries. He always wrote as he would have spoken, without giving any colouring to his thoughts, only intent on using the term which could best lead him straight to his point, although he could be pleasing and persuasive as well as stern or bitter. Being always thoroughly master of what he wanted to say, and stating it clearly, he only wished to make himself understood.³ Neither his letters nor his other writings contributed to his literary renown.

The events to which his father so nearly fell a victim called the young lawyer from his poetry to the stage on which he was so soon to become illustrious. He found himself engaged in struggling with the trials of public life, and ready to bear them with precocious vigour. The imprisonment of his father, following on the coup d'état attempted by William III., pledged

¹ Scheltema, *Mengelwerke*, vol. iii. p. 119.

² The famous *Qu'il mourût* is paraphrased in the lines: 'What would you have him do?—At least, I would not have him take flight, but rather voluntarily give himself over to death.'

³ Veegens, *John de Witt als publiciste*, *De Gids*, 1867.

him irrevocably from his first entry into political life to opposition to the stadtholdership.

Transported as a prisoner of State with his five colleagues to the Castle of Loevenstein in the night of August 1–2, 1650,¹ Jacob de Witt seemed in danger of sharing the fate of Olden Barneveldt and of Grotius. His children must have dreaded for him, if not the condemnation to which the first was a victim, at least the perpetual imprisonment which Grotius would have suffered but for his escape. Jacob de Witt employed the first hours of his captivity in reassuring them in a letter which gave them an account of his arrest, and which he addressed to Cornelius de Witt. As it had to pass through the hands of his gaolers, who had orders to show it to the Prince of Orange, he avoided all recriminations which might have tended to compromise him; and to avert the anxiety of his family he expressed great confidence, strengthened by his religious faith. His Christian resignation helped him to preserve his strength of mind, which is shown in the following proud words: 'Be you equally courageous, and do nothing towards my deliverance but what is honest and proper, having the fear of the Lord always before your eyes.'

The sons to whom he made this appeal were worthy recipients of it. Deprived of news of their father, whose letter had not yet been delivered to them, and alarmed as to his fate, they had started in haste to be near him. They had no knowledge of the notice which Jacob de Witt had hastened to give them, by warning them in a postscript to his letter 'that it would be useless for them to come, no one being as yet admitted into his presence;' but even when they had convinced themselves that they would be refused admittance they were not discouraged.

Whilst Cornelius de Witt returned to Dordrecht to take part in the deliberations in justification of his father's conduct, and to negotiate for his release,² John de Witt remained in

¹ For the correspondence between Jacob de Witt and his sons during his imprisonment, see *De Gids*, 1845, article de M. Von Hasselt; *De Gids*, 1867, article de M. Veegens, and Archives of the House of Orange, Groen Van Prinsterer, vol. iv. p. 396.

² Aitzema, *Zaken van Staat*, vol. iii. p. 451.

the neighbourhood of the fortress. He was lodged at an inn bearing the sign 'Au Vaisseau de son Altesse.'

His first attempt to obtain access to the prisoner met with complete success. He managed to convey to him a private letter giving him the information necessary for his defence. He succeeded afterwards in getting into the prison, and had a first interview with his father, in the presence of the commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Meteren, thus contriving to have remitted, or to elude, the order forbidding any visits.

John de Witt hastened to give an account of this successful attempt in a letter to his brother also unpublished, and which enables us to follow him step by step. 'This morning at six o'clock,' he writes to him, after having begun by telling him of his secret correspondence with his father, 'I went to the castle accompanied by the commandant, to whom the messenger from Dordrecht had just delivered a letter addressed to our lord and father by the magistrates of the town. After he had read it, I received permission to enter his room. There, standing before his bed, in the presence of the commandant, I conversed with him for a long time. I shall remain until the arrival of further news, and I feel quite confident that I shall again find an opportunity of secretly conveying notice of it to our father.'

This correspondence continued, whether with or without the knowledge of the commandant. 'Very dear and beloved children,' wrote Jacob de Witt, 'I have learnt with pleasure by yours of the 10th ultimo that there is a chance of matters being arranged. I am certain that it will come right, and I have no doubt that the deputies of Dordrecht will help us as much as possible. I wait patiently. I am in good humour and very well, of that you may assure yourselves. I am always your affectionate father.'

A fortnight after the arrest of their father, Jacob de Witt's two sons, by a letter from the Prince of Orange to the commandant of Loevenstein, received permission to be admitted to him. 'You will allow them,' he writes, 'to converse for two or three hours with their father, the soldiers remaining at the

door of the room, but you will not permit these young men to see any of the other prisoners.'

Six days later Jacob de Witt was set at liberty, after an imprisonment of three weeks. The submission of the town councils who had consented to receive the resignation of the imprisoned deputies had satisfied the Prince of Orange. The magistrates of Dordrecht, after having opposed an obstinate resistance, ended by giving way; Jacob de Witt having let them know 'that he resigned his municipal offices, without prejudice to the honour and reputation of his family, because he could not conform himself to the present conjuncture of affairs.'

His sons, interested as they were in his release, were none the less resolved to make no act of submission to attain it. They held their father's honour at a higher price even than his deliverance. A contemporary states 'that, exhorted to address a demand to the Prince of Orange that the prisoner might be set at liberty, they refused, declaring that they would not, by interceding for him, appear to place their father in the light of a culprit.' This is no imaginary account; a letter from John de Witt to his brother confirms it.¹ He strongly urges upon him to send the order of release to his father, either by Berck, secretary to the town of Dordrecht,² or by some other delegate from the municipal commune, 'so as to show,' he writes, 'that it is the town of Dordrecht alone that has treated with the Prince.' 'It is of importance,' he adds, 'not to let it be supposed that we have ourselves taken part in the negotiations, which should be avoided at any cost for the preservation of the reputation of our lord and father, and even for the reputation of the country.' For the same reason he hastened to Dordrecht to prevent the vessel destined to bring back his father from being despatched before the arrival of the messenger who was to convey to him the order for his release. 'I cannot think the matter so pressing,'

¹ Letter from John de Witt to Cornelius de Witt, August 17, 1650. Royal Archives.

² It is by mistake, no doubt, that Berck is spoken of as pensionary. The pensionary was Ruysch. Berck was a son by her second marriage of John de Witt's maternal grandmother - Maria Büysen.

he writes, 'as to justify the risk of causing any scandal for the sake of gaining a little time.' John de Witt thus subdued, by the inflexible honesty of his political opinions, the impatience of his filial affection; in the same way that, once intrusted with the first magistracy of the republic, he subordinated all his feelings and interests to the service of his cause and his country.

Jacob de Witt's disgrace, softened as it was by the most flattering testimonials from the magistrates of Dordrecht, was, moreover, but a passing ordeal. Two months and a half after his removal from the town council, the unexpected death of William II. reopened to him the path of honours. At the same time it assured to his son, by a sudden turn of fortune, a compensation for the persecution which he had suffered. The letter¹ in which John de Witt gives an account of the event which was to decide his destiny is curious to read. It is addressed to his uncle, Cornelius van Sypesteyn, and is thus expressed: 'H.H. the Prince of Orange died yesterday evening, between eight and half-past. God keep his soul! His condition seemed to show that all danger was over. The pastor, Stermont, was sent for to him. Some say that he was then unconscious; others that he showed great resignation, and that the pastor having recited some prayers, and asking him if he understood and had trust in them, his Highness answered distinctly "Yes," and shortly expired.' De Witt winds up by praying God 'that so unforeseen an event may tend to the public welfare.' He was eager to turn it to his father's interest. No delay should, he thought, be suffered in restoring Jacob de Witt to his municipal functions. 'An adjournment,' he writes to him, 'would do harm to your lordship's reputation, because, if it were permitted, the council would seem to approve of what had passed, while there is now no fear of violent measures, which could oblige them to deprive you of the exercise of your functions.' At the end of the month he is glad to acquaint one of his relations that 'within the first week which followed the Stadtholder's death

¹ November 7, 1650, Collection Hoog, from the Royal Archives. See account of the Prince's last moments by Pasteur Stermont, Aitzema, vol. iii. p. 457.

his father had re-entered the Assembly of the States of Holland to resume the seat which belonged to him.' He could not fail himself to profit by this signal reparation of his father's disgrace. The death of the Prince of Orange caused the removal of the obstacle which would have shut him out during his youth from the threshold of public life. He was not slow to take advantage of it. The nomination of the Pensionary of Dordrecht, Nicholas Ruysch, to the post of Registrar to the States-General left vacant an office which tempted his ambition. It was at the disposal of the two burgomasters of the town, and his personal qualities as well as his family connections caused it to be confided to him.

He fulfilled the conditions exacted by the Council of Dordrecht, who required of their pensionaries a knowledge of French and Latin and the degree of Doctor of Law.

The office with which he was invested gave to the holder the title of pensionary, because it was remunerated by an annual pension. It demanded many and solid acquirements, as well as great powers of speech.¹

In fact, the pensionaries of the Dutch towns had become their principal representatives. They had at first filled no other functions than those of juriconsults, either to be commissioned as advocates with law-suits relating to the affairs of the commune, or to help with their advice the sheriffs or elective judges of the city, who were chosen by the magistrates and often unacquainted with the study of the law. They had gradually obtained admission to the sittings of the Council as well as to the meetings of the burgomasters, and gave their opinions on all questions concerning either the municipal rights or the constitution of the country. They had added to their original attributions prerogatives much more extended, those of political power, in acquiring the right of accompanying the deputies from the town council to the States of Holland. Being almost always charged to speak in their name, they could the more easily assume to themselves the principal authority as they had a permanent right to a seat in the Assembly of the

¹ Moens, p. 67. *Thèse, De Munere pensionariorum civitatum*, Leyden, 1789.

Provinces, whilst the other deputies, sent by the magistrates of the towns, were constantly changed.

In a government enjoying freedom of debate and where oratory was the instrument of power, they were naturally pointed out for the confidence of the State.

The Pensionary of Dordrecht, by reason of that town ranking first at the sittings, had the privilege of replacing the Grand Pensionary of Holland.

It was not, therefore, any subordinate post that John de Witt was about to occupy. He started in public life with functions which naturally led up to the higher rank to which he was soon to be raised. From his earliest youth he had seen freely opening before him that career as a statesman which was to be so gloriously filled and so tragically ended.

The events which tended towards his rapid fortune involved him in the political career which he followed up to his death.

His father's disgrace left a vivid impression on his mind, and Jacob de Witt had taken pleasure in strengthening it.

If one may put faith in rather doubtful evidence,¹ he often entered upon the subject with his sons, saying, 'Remember the prison of Loevenstein.' Nevertheless, John de Witt was too high-minded and intelligent to allow his conduct to be governed by private wrongs. It was in the interest of Holland that he meant to serve by opposing the maintenance of the stadtholder's powers, of which William II. had made use in a manner which threatened the independence of the province, and which it seemed to him must inevitably be abused by the Orange party during the minority of his son.

The power which devolved upon him in his capacity as Pensionary of Dordrecht, and the still recent recollection of the persecution of his father, were guarantees for his influence in the great Assembly which had just instituted the new government of the Confederation. He played an active part in its deliberations, and in the mission with which he was entrusted soon gave evidence of that talent of persuasion with which he was gifted, and which was soon to help him in

¹ *Mémoires de Guiche*, vi. Introduction, p. 50.

governing the republic. Despatched with three other deputies of the States of Holland to the States of Zeeland, he spoke in their name¹ in the Assembly of that province, to dissuade them from appointing William II.'s son to be Admiral and Captain-General. The memoir with which he furnished them represented the inutility of giving to a child a power which he could not himself exercise and the danger of a premature engagement dispensing the young prince from proving himself worthy of public confidence. At the same time, to give satisfaction to Zeeland, De Witt was instructed to promise that Holland would not proceed to the nomination of an admiral and captain-general without some preliminary agreement. This assurance, which guaranteed the young prince against the competition of any other candidate to the military command, happily re-established concord.

John de Witt soon acquired fresh titles to the sympathies of the party he was about to lead. When the Grand Pensionary Cats made known to the deputies of Holland the memoir in which William II. sought to justify his coup d'état, he was instructed to report upon it. He proposed to reply to this apology, not only by energetic protestations, but also by pressing demands to the States-General to suppress the resolutions, in which the Federal Assembly had pronounced in favour of the late Stadtholder's undertaking. The States of Holland prudently qualifying the conclusion of this report, preferred to wait for that satisfaction from the States-General, which was soon offered to them spontaneously. They contented themselves with publishing the refutation of the Stadtholder's memorandum, and with giving a formal approval of the conduct of the deputies whom William II. had deprived of their office. John de Witt had thus the good fortune to obtain justice for the outrage done to his father, as well as to the States of his province, and to satisfy at once the private and public grievances, which made him consider that change of government had given him his revenge. Nevertheless his firmness did not exclude moderation, as he proved

¹ Aitzema, *Zaken van Staat*, vol. iii. p. 560.

by the part he took in the vote of amnesty accorded to the accomplices in the late Stadtholder's coup d'état. One of his correspondents in Zealand, Justus de Huybert, a member of the regency of Middleburg, congratulated him on having, like his father, contributed with such wisdom, prudence, and decision to the happy work of re-establishing order in the republic. His political foresight was equally manifested by the part he took in the resolutions designed to consolidate the power of the States of Holland, it was upon his report that the governors and magistrates were bound to take an oath to them, and in thus contributing to the recognition of their supreme authority he soon found himself in a position to exercise it himself in their name.

One year after his nomination as pensionary of Dordrecht, the office of first minister of his province was open to him, and power, so to speak, came to meet him half-way. The day on which the Grand Assembly dispersed, the pensionary of Holland, Jacob Cats, aged seventy-three, more celebrated as a poet than as a statesman, had resigned. He fell upon his knees before the whole House¹ to thank God for permitting him to give up his office in peace, and retired to his little property near the Hague to finish the popular work of his 'Fables.' His successor, Pauw d'Heemstede, who had already, once before Cats, exercised the functions of Grand Pensionary, in the course of which he had incurred the enmity of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, was with difficulty persuaded to accept a second nomination. He only yielded to the entreaties of the States of Holland, who appealed to his patriotism. Scarcely had he entered on his office than the States-General, hoping to avert the imminent danger of a war with England, sent him on an embassy to London in spite of his repugnance to absent himself.² During his absence, De Witt, in his capacity as pensionary of Dordrecht, was summoned to replace him. This short tenure of government, lasting scarcely more than a month, sufficed for him to prove that the conduct

¹ *Hollandsch Mercurius*, September 1651. Resolution of the States of Holland, September 27, 1651.

² Resolutions of the States-General, June 13, 1652.

of public affairs might safely be entrusted to him. Moreover, when the Grand Pensionary Pauw returned, De Witt continued to assist him, remaining in charge of the diplomatic correspondence. He was thus beginning his apprenticeship to the first magistracy of the republic when a new occasion offered of distinguishing himself and adding lustre to his growing reputation.

The government which the Great Assembly had just established was again called in question. Zealand, which had with difficulty been restrained the previous year, gave formidable signs of a popular rising for the purpose of forcing upon the States-General the re-establishment of the Prince of Orange's authority, if not as Stadtholder, at least as Admiral and Captain-General, with Count William of Nassau as lieutenant. The deputies of Middleburg were commissioned by their town council, who were governed by the seditious party, to transmit this proposition to the States of Zealand.

Fearing thenceforth that the other provinces, secretly encouraged by the Count of Nassau,¹ might respond to the appeal, the States-General hastened to check at its outset this sudden reaction. They sent commissioners to the States of Zealand to convey to them the most urgent remonstrances. John de Witt, who had already succeeded, during the Grand Assembly, with the negotiations with that province, was by common consent chosen to make one of the deputation. Arrived with his colleagues at Middleburg on August 31, 1652, after crossing a country disturbed by popular demonstrations, De Witt urged the re-assembling of the States of Zealand. But before they were assembled, the populace of Middleburg had already risen, 'taking the bit between its teeth,' as De Witt wrote to his father, in giving him an account of his mission. 'Many people had warned us,' he added in the same letter, 'that the population here had been conspiring and intended to massacre us, either on our entrance into or on our leaving the Assembly. Nevertheless, measures having been

¹ See letters of Mauregnault to the Prince of Nassau, July and August 1652. Sypesteyn, *Geschiedkundige Bijdragen*, vol. i. Bijlage, pp. 192-208.

taken for our safety, we felt it our duty to acquit ourselves of our commission.'

To leave them more at liberty to proceed with caution, the deputies of Holland had been apparently charged only with the settlement of certain matters interesting the two provinces, and altogether foreign to the resolutions relative to the nomination of the Prince of Orange; but the inhabitants, easily guessing the object of their mission, and resolved to oppose it, surrounded the house where they were lodged. 'The dispositions in which we found the people here,' writes John de Witt, with good-humoured banter, 'have caused us to observe that they would willingly prevent our being annoyed by the fevers of Zeeland or any other malady, so much so, that they would spare us the expense of our return and of provisioning our vessel for the journey. But fortunately the States of Zeeland have made all arrangements necessary for our arriving in their Assembly with whole skins.'

The town council, which was half an accomplice in the sedition, gave them to understand that they acknowledged themselves incapable of protecting them, and recommended them to avert by a prompt retreat the danger to which their lives were exposed.

The firmness of the deputies of Holland was shaken. They consulted together as to whether they should not retire and send their proposals in writing to the States of Zeeland. They would, no doubt, have preferred this more timid expedient, had not John de Witt courageously represented to them that they would fail alike in their duty and honour if they succumbed to violence. He declared his determination to execute the commands of his sovereigns the States, even if his colleagues would not venture with him. His proud resolve restored their confidence, and they determined to proceed to the Assembly of the States of the province. Nevertheless, combining prudence with courage and justly doubtful of the measures taken for their security, they sent for some officers and men from the neighbouring garrisons, to insure them the protection of an armed force.

Under this escort, the deputies of Holland made their way

through the crowd without troubling themselves about its outcries. They escaped the fury of a populace thirsting for blood, 'who,' says De Witt, 'would have massacred me had it not been for the assistance of one of my colleagues;' and entered the Abbey of Middleburg, where the States were sitting, to communicate to them the instructions they had received. They made the most of the necessity of preserving unity between the two provinces; they dwelt upon the assurance given the year before by Holland, which had undertaken to make no proposals for the re-establishment of the office of Captain-General without a previous understanding with Zeeland, and energetically demanded that no notice should be taken of the proposition of the deputies of Middleburg. It was nevertheless submitted to the town councils.

Uneasy at such a concession to popular exactions, the deputies of Holland returned to give an account of their mission. Their fears were soon realised. The resolution which called for the nomination of the Prince of Orange as Admiral and Captain-General was voted for by the States of Zeeland, and elicited the strongest remonstrances from John de Witt, addressed to the secretary of their Assembly, Justus de Huybert.

'The resolution of the States of Zeeland having been communicated to me,' he writes to him, 'I must acknowledge in my own name, as well as in that of the deputies of the other provinces with whom I have conferred on this subject, my astonishment at not finding in it any sign of the harmonious relations so long maintained with Zeeland.' 'It even seems to me,' he adds, 'to be inspired, in several clauses, by a desire of recrimination in regard to Holland. As to the truth of its accusations, I leave them to the judgment of those who are disturbing the peace, and who for some time past have forced me to be a witness of unjust and inopportune measures. At all events, they do not appear to me to be what one would have expected from the wisdom and prudence of the States of Zeeland.'

Still the stand made by the deputies of Holland was not

without result. It prevented the States of Zealand from communicating to the States-General the determination to which they had come. They contented themselves with sending their deputies, MM. de Mauregnault, De Tholen, and Stavenisse, the pensionary of Flushing, to the Hague, where they entered into communication with the States of Holland. The latter gave acting powers to several commissioners, amongst whom was De Witt, in his capacity of pensionary of Dordrecht. He speaks of the Zealand negotiators as 'three hot-headed young fellows,' although he congratulates himself on their courtesy, good manners, and friendly deference. He strongly urged them to set about the reconciliation of the two provinces and moderating their impetuosity, whilst prolonging for six weeks the conferences on which he was to report. To make this report more conclusive, the States of Holland added a manifesto, which was also given into his hands, and was unanimously approved. They recalled to mind the undertaking of the provinces in the Great Assembly of 1651—to leave vacant the post of captain-general, unless in case of necessity. They stated that nothing appeared to them to call for its re-establishment, as there was no army in the field, and declared that the military power would not without detriment be placed in the hands of a child. They also declared against the nomination of the Count of Nassau as lieutenant to William II.'s son, calling to mind the fresh jealousies which might result between the two branches of the House of Orange, but made no allusion to any grievance on account of the Stadtholder's coup d'état, that they might not be supposed to be irreconcilable.

This policy of resistance without provocation was successful. 'I hope,' writes De Witt, 'that the affair of the captain-general will no longer interrupt the deliberations of the States of Holland. The zeal of its promoters is greatly cooling down, and its hopes of success have been seemingly destroyed by the unanimity with which the Assembly opposes itself to all change of government.' In thus baffling the attempts of Zealand, which alone could give the signal for an Orange

restoration, De Witt had secured to himself the gratitude of his province, which recognised in him a most energetic defender of the new government. The perils which he had braved made his intrepidity conspicuous; and the difficulties which he had just overcome, during the progress of the conferences now happily ended, no less contributed to the appreciation of his merits as a negotiator. The part which he took in the direction of foreign affairs, in the committees charged with the negotiations with England and with the other Powers, completed the precocious pledges which he gave of his political experience. The surname of 'The Wisdom of Holland' had already been bestowed on him, when, at eight-and-twenty, less than a year after his mission to Zealand, he was chosen by the States of Holland to be their prime minister.

The Grand Pensionary of the province, Adrien Pauw d'Heemstede, had just died at the age of sixty-eight, after a short ministry of eighteen months. The States of Holland were not yet assembled when his illness again obliged him to delegate his functions to his usual assistant. The councillor deputies, hoping perhaps for his recovery, postponed for some days the convocation of the Assembly. But on the afternoon of the day on which the States resumed their sittings they received the news of his decease, and on the following day they adjourned all resolutions until after his funeral. The choice of John de Witt was so pointed out, both by his special position as pensionary of Dordrecht and by the personal influence which he exercised over the Assembly, that the councillor deputies waited to summon the States until he was at liberty to come, according to custom, and direct their debates. By a unanimous vote he was at once elected to fill the place which the death of the Grand Pensionary left vacant, and to exercise its functions until a successor had been definitely named.

His father's encouragement was not wanting. Jacob de Witt, who had not yet returned from a diplomatic mission which he was fulfilling at Lübeck, wrote to him: 'In the event of their casting their eyes on you, it would be better, in my opinion, not to stand out too seriously, only to express some

modest doubts, and to leave the authorities of Dordrecht to conduct the affair as may seem best to them.'

It was a formidable task which John de Witt had to fulfil. He found the United Provinces engaged in a war with England, under the weight of which they were in danger of sinking, and he took up the heavy burden of power at a time as critical for the maintenance of the new government as for the independence of his country. When the States of Holland reassembled for their summer sitting, there could be no further hesitation in definitely bestowing upon him the office of Grand Pensionary. Nevertheless, after having made out the instructions for the benefit of the minister whom they were about to elect, they prepared a list of nine candidates all qualified as Doctors of Law. The deputies of Dordrecht, out of deference to the scruples of their pensionary, were the only ones who named Ruyl, the pensionary of Haarlem, one of the deputies imprisoned by the late Stadtholder, but all the other votes were given to John de Witt. He was thus summoned by a first election, destined to be three times renewed, to undertake functions which demanded the consecration and sacrifice of his life to the interests of the republic. Before accepting them, he was obliged to obtain the authority of the Council of Dordrecht, and to be relieved of the oath by which he had engaged to accept no other employment than that of pensionary of that town. This formality was promptly complied with, and a few days later, on July 30, 1653, his nomination was unanimously sanctioned. 'He is a young man, under thirty years of age,' writes the French ambassador, 'and who already possesses such fine qualities, as, brought out by this very important situation, may hereafter render him eminent.'

He had not sought this post. Fearing the formidable task confided to his youth, he was rather disposed to refuse it, in spite of the legitimate ambition which so tempting an offer of power might awaken even in the most modest of men. He only accepted it as a public service, which was imposed upon him and which he could not evade. The letter in which he informs his father of his nomination gives proof of his

indecision. 'Sir and Father,' he writes, 'their Noble Mightinesses have to-day asked, and unanimously voted me, to fill the vacant office of pensionary of Holland. Thereupon I have asked and obtained some days for reflection on this important matter, and also to confer with you as well as with the magistrates of Dordrecht, to whom I owe obedience and respect; to which end, their Noble Mightinesses having given me permission to make a journey to Dordrecht, I intend to start to-morrow, of which I will also give notice to my brother, who is now in Amsterdam, and I have no doubt that on receipt of the letter he will immediately go to Dordrecht. I ask you, quitting all other business, to go there at once, and I conclude, confident in your doing so.' 'I have conferred,' he writes a few days later to Van Beuningen, 'with the burgo-masters and magistrates of the town of Dordrecht, as well as with my nearest relations, as to the heavy charge to which their Noble Mightinesses have been pleased to call me, and all have encouraged me to take this burden upon me, in spite of the troubled times.' The fatal destiny which awaited him had been predicted. Amongst his brethren at the bar 'there were some,' says a memoir of the time,¹ 'who shook their heads, saying, "This young man flies too high; he will not die a natural death."'

He must often have thought over the grave counsel addressed to him at the end of an encouraging letter by the friend and companion of his father's captivity in the castle of Loevenstein, the Deputy Keyser, who wrote to him: 'Once become Grand Pensionary, it should be a matter of indifference to you whether you are put into your coffin whole or in pieces.' De Witt proved himself to his last day to be one of those who trouble themselves little as to whether they live or die at their post, provided they have valiantly and faithfully done their duty.

In default of memoirs which he had no time to leave, his private correspondence, as it is preserved in the family papers and in the registers of the archives, allows us to follow him

¹ *Historisch Verhaal*, van C. en J. de Witt, 1677. Royal Library at the Hague.

in his home life after his entry on his functions, and to live again, so to speak, in intimacy with him. In spite of a somewhat ceremonious reserve, which is rarely absent, it omits no details, even the most familiar, of his daily life. It shows us the man himself, and this knowledge of the man is of no less importance to history than that of the events in which he took part.

The exercise of power in no way altered the simplicity of taste which was habitual to him, and strengthened rather than loosened his family ties. Once elected Grand Pensionary of Holland, he had quitted the quarters of the deputies of Dordrecht, called the White House, where he had till then resided, and established himself in a large house resembling a fortress, of which he no doubt occupied but a portion. His private fortune, which only amounted to 10,000 florins, according to his declaration on the tax papers, and his salary, which did not exceed 3,000 florins, obliged him to content himself with a very modest establishment. The direction of his household was confided to the care of his eldest sister, Johanna, eight years older than himself, who had married Beveren de Zwyndrecht, and had always testified the most tender solicitude for him. He commissioned her to procure for him the necessary furniture. For the sake of economy she sent him furniture purchased second-hand at Dordrecht, bought him the requisite linen, and sent him his provisions, to which later his father added a supply of wine. She had found for him a trustworthy and hard-working maid-servant, who sufficed for the internal care of the house, and advised her brother 'to give her help once a week, so that the work should not be too hard for her.' When he wished to buy some horses, one of his uncles, Cornelius van Sypesteyn, adjured him not to stick at a high price, 'being,' he said, 'of opinion that such an equipage was a part of his gilded slavery.' John de Witt, on the contrary, preferred 'to procure for the sum of forty or fifty florins some horses which would not be too spirited and would not cost him so much. As to the coachman, he proposed to employ him in looking after the garden and in doing commissions.'

His correspondence furnishes the most touching proofs of his father's assistance. Jacob de Witt corrected his son's first political letters, supplied him with notes, and gave him counsels of moderation and prudence. Sometimes he urges him to avoid useless collisions, and suggests to him precautions to be taken to satisfy the council of Dordrecht; sometimes he warns him to mistrust certain connections; and John de Witt, with docility to this advice, answers that he will be on his guard. His maternal uncle, Cornelius van Sypesteyn, also evinced the strongest regard for him. 'I am at your service,' he writes, 'and I shall always be happy to do anything for you, for the sake of the affectionate regard we shall bear for you to our lives' end. I know of no one in the world, excepting my wife, who would so willingly be of use to you as I would, and the love which Orestes testified to his friend when he said, "Me, me, adsum qui feci: in me convertite ferrum," is not more than what I feel for you. I pray God that you may never be unfortunate enough to have to test it.' Cornelius van Sypesteyn had acquired a large fortune by cultivating the dunes, and possessed a country house at Hillegem, between Leyden and Haarlem, where he liked to exercise hospitality. He collected the most agreeable people there, and often arranged shooting parties in which John de Witt and his brother Cornelius used to take part. 'It seems,' he writes to his nephew, 'that you are so much taken up with tending your goats and lambs that you no longer care to come here and look after the young shepherdesses.' A few years later Cornelius de Witt writes to his brother that 'he is sorry not to meet him at his uncle's, that they might shoot rabbits together, try a first-rate basset and hunt with ferrets.'

When John de Witt could afford himself a holiday, it was at Hillegem that he went to spend it. He often thanked his uncle for the pleasure the latter had given him, and, wishing to prove the interest he took in his game, he sent him a bill, passed by the States, which he had brought forward for the destruction of birds of prey.

Public affairs did not prevent the young minister from keeping up the closest intimacy with his numerous relations.

He often wrote to them to give them the benefit of his advice and assistance, and even sent one of them legal opinions in Latin. He still took pleasure in family gatherings, as his correspondence shows. He received in the following terms an invitation from one of his aunts, Maria Van de Corput, whose son-in-law Heydanus, a theologian of Leyden had won the friendship of Descartes by his defence of his philosophy. 'I must tell you,' she writes to her nephew, 'that my son-in-law has a great desire to see you at his table with a few professors. But he knows so well how precious your time is, that he only dares to write to you through me. If you will at your convenience grant him a Saturday or any other day, he would be glad to know the evening before, to send out a few invitations.'

When it is a question of a wedding, to which John de Witt was unable to go, because he had been called upon the day before to exercise provisionally the office of Grand Pensionary, 'I should have been in my element,' he writes, 'and you know me well enough to be aware that under such circumstances I am as much at my ease as a fish in the water.'

The world had also great attractions for him, and he took pleasure in affairs of gallantry after the fashion of French society in the seventeenth century. Amongst the great ladies of the Hague there were several who used to apply to him, as humble clients, to obtain some favour or employment for their relations. He kept up correspondence with them, in which he generally employed French, which was the language of refined society. He showed the most graceful readiness to listen to their requests. When his scruples did not allow of his satisfying them, he took the greatest pains to preserve their good graces.

Sophia Margaret of Nassau had made him feel the charm of her society at the balls of the Hague. A grand-daughter of a brother of William I. and sister of John Maurice, governor of Brazil, she was still unmarried when at forty-three she first met John de Witt. Her brother, Count Henry of Nassau, commandant of the town of Hulst, had just died,

and she was anxious that the company which he had commanded for twenty years should be given to his son, her nephew William of Nassau. She earnestly sought the favour of John de Witt, begging him to continue his friendliness to a family 'which,' she writes, 'is called not Orange, but Nassau.' She took great pains to keep herself aloof from the family which was shut out from power, and made the most urgent appeal to the good-will of the Grand Pensionary, reminding him at the same time of the payment of the pension which had been for five years owing to her sister-in-law. She told him that if he did not entertain this petition he would lose the good opinion she had of him, and promised to prove her gratitude by a work of her own hands, which she hoped he would keep as a remembrance. A month later she sent it to him, adding a note in French verse, which ended thus—

Et ne sera jamais dit
Que je me dédie,
Tant que j'aurai de vie,
Votre très fidèle amie.

De Witt, who in conformity with his instructions refused all presents of whatever nature, did not feel at liberty to keep a gift to which he nevertheless attached great value. 'Had I robbed you of what it pleased you in your goodness and generosity to send me,' he writes to the princess, 'I should feel no weight on my conscience; I should keep it all my life as having belonged to one whom I can never forget, treasuring up always what comes from her as I now guard and cherish for ever what I stole from you on that joyful night we lately passed together. But permit me, I beseech you, to remain an honest man, and not to break a promise which I have made and confirmed by a solemn oath. That you may not impute to ingratitude or a want of affection what arises from absolute necessity, I here send you (with the enclosure, which only leaves me drawing my heart with it) an extract from the instructions which are my law, and, though reasonable under all other circumstances, very hard in this one.' He announced to her at the same time the postponement of

her sister-in-law's petition, 'which,' he says, 'will be no pleasanter to you than to me.'

To avoid incurring her displeasure he offers her a watch, 'to pay,' he writes to her, 'what I owe you since the fair at the Hague.' 'Deprived of the satisfaction of her presence,' he commissions Admiral Obdam to give her this present, and winds up his letter with a compliment which bears the impress of the affected tone of the time. 'This moveable instrument should be the more agreeable to you since you have this in common with others of your sex, that mobility is not disagreeable to you, of which I have had proofs at those assemblies where dancing and sporting were the pastimes.'

The correspondence of John de Witt with Baroness Amelia de Slavatha gives us a no less interesting insight into his first youthful inclinations.

The Baroness de Slavatha was the daughter of Major-General Bréderode, whose support was of great importance to John de Witt. She presided at the gatherings so often held at his uncle's, Cornelius van Sypesteyn, and held the title of Grand Mistress of the Order of the Union of Mirth, a society which had for its aim the most varied social amusements. De Witt was too anxious to belong to it to excuse himself from the demands made upon him by the Baroness Slavatha. 'Madam,' he writes, 'if it were permissible in a poor knight, who is only admitted into your order by a great piece of luck which Heaven has most unexpectedly sent him, to express what he thinks of the actions of the Grand Mistress, I should say that you do injustice to your greatness by using terms of supplication towards one whom you have the right to command, from which I should fear that you doubt my promptitude in obeying your behests. Never can I have greater happiness than when I succeed in the undertaking and execution of something which I know will please you, praying God to create occasions more favourable than those you mention, so as to confirm the above, not by words only but by deeds, and begging you therefore to honour me with your commands, always and whenever you deem me capable of rendering you some service. Do not again, then, use any supplications or prayers, although

your prayers always stand to me in place of commands, but treat me as I am, in truth, your very humble and obedient servant.'

Another time, De Witt again takes the opportunity of pleasing her by obtaining, according to her wish, three months' leave for her husband, a cavalry captain in the service of the States, and he promises to have it extended if Baron Slavatha's affairs should keep him in Germany.

'Your attractions,' he writes, 'and the feelings which the recollections of your marvellous beauties must awake in M. de Slavatha, will no doubt spare me the trouble of working for this extension, as the same beauties, and a thousand other qualities which I admire in you, give me life, and leave me ever in your service.' Some years later, when Baroness Slavatha lost her husband, he hastens to offer her his condolences. 'I admit,' he says, 'that the loss you have sustained is irreparable for you, but as it is also inevitable, and as God gave you time to prepare for it, I do not doubt that with the strength of mind and good sense which appear in all your actions He will have equally given you the force and determination necessary to resist such severe trials.'

We must not, however, look for the expression of a youthful passion in this correspondence. In fact, it is by the intervention of Baroness Slavatha that De Witt offers his no less gallant attentions to other ladies, with whom he appears to have been equally fascinated. 'I shall not trouble myself to send my compliments to your coadjutrix,' he writes, 'as I am myself always with her, my soul perpetually rendering her that homage which is her due, although my body, by an inevitable impediment, is absent.' Moreover, these somewhat trifling friendships were but transitory. He needed, on entering on his career as a public man, to ensure himself a peaceful refuge in conjugal life, as in a harbour against a storm. His brother Cornelius had encouraged him in matrimony by his own example. In the month following his father's imprisonment, he had married Maria van Berkel, whose father, John van Berkel, had been receiver-general to the province of Holland, and whose mother, Elizabeth Prince,

belonged to one of the noble families of Rotterdam. Only eighteen years of age, she was already gifted with an imposing style of beauty which was the visible sign of a strong mind and a firm will. Her hair, which she wore in a coronet round her head, her brilliant complexion, her great black eyes, shining with a glowing light, her somewhat full but bright red lips, her splendid figure, her majestic bearing, all betokened energy. Her portrait, by Van der Werf, as it is preserved by the last descendants of the family, represents her in all the bloom of youth. An orphan on the father's side, she had received a portion of about 10,000 florins. She exercised the greatest power over her husband. The masculine force of her character justified the weight of her advice, and her brother-in-law himself sought it more than once in the correspondence which he kept up with her, recognising thus the superiority of her mind as well as the correctness of her judgment.

Two years had scarcely elapsed since the nomination of John de Witt as Grand Pensionary, when his marriage completed the measure of good fortune which was reserved for his youth. It was to his interest to contract for himself an alliance which would assure to him the support of a political connection in the council of one of the towns of Holland, and he sought one which might best confirm his power by guaranteeing to him the co-operation of the magistrates of Amsterdam. After having vainly paid his attentions to the daughter of one of the former burgomasters, the celebrated physician Nicholas Tulp, he found a more favourable reception from Wendela Bicker, who belonged to one of the principal burgher families in Holland, which was noted for its attachment to the republican party.

The ties of friendship, of services rendered, the recollection of recent trials suffered for the same cause, already united the family of Bicker to that of De Witt. The two elder brothers, Andrew Bicker, an old colleague of Jacob de Witt in his embassies to the northern courts, and Cornelius Bicker van Swieten, had both distinguished themselves by their patriotic resistance to the Stadtholder William II. Their wealth made them sovereigns of the Amsterdam Exchange. Cornelius

Bicker van Swieten, after having made his fortune in the India Company, had sold his shares to carry on business on his own account in Brazil, and his profits amounted to more than 100,000 florins a year. Vondel writes in some of his verses that the flag of the Bickers overshadowed the ocean, which was ploughed by their ships, bringing to Holland the golden harvest of far countries. The third brother of this wealthy family, John Bicker, who had taken no part in the events of 1650, had just died in the exercise of his duty as burgomaster, which he had filled in his turn as a sort of fraternal inheritance.

He had married Agneta de Graeff, a sister of two of the principal magistrates of the town, and acquired a large fortune partly by himself and partly through his wife. He had contributed to augment the prosperity of Amsterdam by his undertakings, and his name was given to one of the islands of Holland, Bicker Island. He left five daughters, who had each a portion of 5,000 florins. They spent the first year of their mother's widowhood in their father's country house at Beverwyck. The two eldest were married—one, Elizabeth, to a nephew of her mother's, Jacob Tryp; the other, Gertrude, to a rich merchant, John Deutz, who had made a contract with Spain to furnish quicksilver to the amount of a million to the Spanish colonies, and to whom John de Witt afterwards confided the charge of his pecuniary affairs. It was upon the third, Wendela, born in 1636, that the Grand Pensionary's choice fell, attracted by the budding charms of her beauty and the gentle amiability of her character. He was most assiduous in his efforts to please her. He speaks in his letters of the weeks during which he was absent from the Hague in Amsterdam, while yet uncertain of succeeding in his suit. When he obtained the desired assent he hastened to show his happiness to his betrothed.

'Although up to this time,' he writes, 'I have, in obedience to a formal though strict order, abstained from writing in this manner, I hope in the future to be able to avail myself of such converse without offending you. Although I have not yet received an express permission, I thought it would not be

disagreeable to you to be informed by this of the arrival, in good will and good health, of him with whom you have in future determined to pass your life in order to insure his happiness. The expectation of this creates much happiness in my soul, and that happiness would be complete were it not troubled by the impatience of my desires. I do all I can to master them, but I find that the nearer I approach to the enjoyment of that blissful day which is promised to me, the more this impatient ardour increases and gets the better of me. If it continues thus to goad me with increasing passion, I fear I shall not pass through this period of waiting without falling ill, unless in my sufferings I am solaced by the sweetness of your presence. I entreat for it, therefore, while endeavouring on my side to enjoy it as soon as possible.'

Apparently Wendela could not conquer her timidity and reserve sufficiently to respond to this declaration. She merely gives her opinion as to the house which she was to occupy, saying that she wished it to be big and warm, but that she thought the one of which a plan was sent her would suit her perfectly. She informs her betrothed at the same time that there is no need to trouble himself about the invitations until the wedding is settled. 'You can ask whom you like,' she writes to him, but takes care to add: 'My mother tells me that the numbers will not be very great.'¹ The marriage was celebrated with much pomp. John de Witt, although accustomed to the austere simplicity of his father's house, had to conform himself to the more elegant customs of his new family.

Wendela Bicker, when she left her mother's house to go to the church, wore a magnificent dress, and was crowned with jewels. She had with her her uncles on both sides, who formed an illustrious retinue. Cornelius Bicker was there, as well as Cornelius and Andrew de Graeff. They came to seal an alliance which, by uniting their two illustrious families to that of the Prime Minister of Holland, gave them in common the same traditions of honour and devotion to their country. On the side of John de Witt the friends and relations

¹ February 16, 1665. See the interesting pamphlet by M. Veegens on Wendela Bicker.

were still more numerous. His father, his brother and sister-in-law, his two sisters, De Zwyndrecht and Hœufft, with their husbands, his uncle Van Sypesteyn, his cousins Vivien and Focanus, all came in response to the invitations they had received. They were accompanied by the members of the Council of Dordrecht and a few particular friends, such as the advocate Van den Andel, with whom John de Witt had pursued his legal studies, and Jerome van Beverningh, who, of the same age and opinions, was a friend and companion in arms in public life.

All the guests assembled at a mirthful banquet. Songs and recitations succeeded it. The great poet Vondel addressed the young couple in one of his finest odes,¹ in which, following the mythological fancies of the time, he celebrated the happy meeting of the goddess of Liberty with the goddess of Love to take under their protection the welfare of John de Witt and his wife. In it he rendered eloquent homage to the public virtues of the young minister. 'De Witt,' he writes, 'in the prime of his manhood, stands at the helm, and lets no storm tear it from his hands. No favours discompose him, as no hatred alarms him. His prudence restores swords to their scabbards, and he promotes that much-desired peace with England which exempts the citizens from heavy taxes, and leaves the peasants free to cultivate their fields where gold and silver are springing up.' He congratulates him on his alliance with the illustrious family whose renown is added to his own, and engages him to taste the joys of the new life opening before him. 'The work of the State,' says the goddess of Liberty, 'requires a support, a gentle solace. When my faithful guardian is seated in the midst of papers which surround him as a rampart, when he argues in the Council and is daily assailed by the cares of government, his wife alone can give him rest and comfort by her gracious welcome. Advance, then, goddess of Love, and place in the hearts of this young couple your chaste fervour, that this timid girl, united to him who loves her, may henceforth set at nought the crosses of

¹ *Vie et Mort de C. et J. de Witt*, by Van den Hoeven, p. 71. Amsterdam, 1705.

life, and receive with joy into her arms the young hero who has pledged her his faith.'

The congratulations of the first personages of the States completed the eulogies of the poets. Major-General Bréderode, the young Prince of Orange's uncle, writes to John de Witt: 'It was with much satisfaction that I heard of the resolution you have made to change your condition, and to ally yourself with a family so eminent in your country. I pray God that this marriage may succeed to His glory and your contentment, so that you may see continued in your race those great gifts which have been given to you for the service of the republic of the United Provinces.'

Nieupoort, the ambassador to the States-General in England, hastened to address him with good wishes in these terms: 'Feeling sure that you have relished the flavour of the fruit so long desired, I wish you under the circumstances the happiness which M. Cats wished to me with a solemn countenance at the college of the deputy councillors after my marriage—that is, "that you may live long enough to wear one another to rags."' "

He adds to this rather vulgar compliment an invitation from Cromwell, who had expressed his desire to receive the young couple in London.

De Witt declined this invitation, not wishing to leave the Hague.

During the three weeks which followed his marriage he had remained at Amsterdam with his wife's family, to keep out of the way of business, and to give himself up entirely to the first effusion of conjugal affection. 'This loving occupation,' as Nieupoort calls it, interrupted the usual regularity of his despatches. He writes to Boreel, the ambassador to France: 'My long absence here and my domestic happiness have caused me to discontinue our correspondence. I hope you will forget my negligence, which I will endeavour to make up for.'

When he brought back to his hearth her whom he had chosen as the companion of his life, he recognised that he had found in her with that grace which captivates the eyes, the

devotion which wins the heart. Her portrait by Nescher represents her with lovely fine hair falling in fair ringlets on her forehead, grey eyes with a tender light in them, a swan-like neck adorned with a necklace of pearls, a slight and graceful figure, and a look of great refinement. She is dressed in a petticoat of brown material, which just allows a glimpse of a very small foot, and a blue satin bodice edged with white fur. The painter has placed her in an attitude which reveals a submissive character. Her early education had been neglected, like that of the generality of girls at Amsterdam too much taken up with worldly life for serious occupations. Ten years after her marriage she asks John de Witt not to be vexed at her writing or the style of her letters. Nor did she ever attempt to influence her husband; she was too humble and diffident of herself to take any part in public life. She signed herself writing to him 'your unworthy spouse,' and feared her husband's time was too valuable to be spent in reading her simple letters. She apologises for her weaknesses and many failings, that she may not seem too importunate in her wish to keep him beside her.

Full of respect and admiration for his character, doing homage to his superiority, she had no other thought than that of making his home life pleasant and peaceful. She gave herself up to the cares of the household with active superintendence. De Witt calls her in his letters to her 'the dear and worthy commander of my home.' When she went away, at rare intervals, to spend a few days at Amsterdam with her family, she showed herself solicitous for her husband's comfort, desiring him, as he had promised, not to fail 'to breakfast every morning, which is good for your health,' and not forgetting the necessary instructions for the good order of the house.

She timidly attempted a few verses, or rather rhymes, to wish him many happy returns of his birthday—something in these terms: 'I wish you, John de Witt, a year of peace and repose. Such is the desire of your loving wife, united to you by the bonds of matrimony. I wish you a happy year, I who am your second soul, to whom you are the dear half of mine.'

She adds, as if to excuse herself: 'It is all I can do.' There was no need for any eloquent expression of her affection, it was shown on all occasions. According to one of the family traditions, Wendela Bicker was nicknamed 'The Gentle Sheep;' while her sister-in-law, Maria van Berkel, is reported to have worn a man's dress.¹ Living only for her husband, and having no emotions but those of conjugal life, she died without having experienced any of the trials and misfortunes of him to whom her fate was united. She only knew his prosperous days, and brought him nothing but happiness.

This domestic interior, enlivened by social amusement, and cheered by the sweet radiancy of reciprocal love, brings out in its true light the individuality of the public man. Around the prime minister were grouped those who had served him in some measure as civil lieutenants, ready to second all his views and to help him with their counsel in the direction of diplomatic negotiations, as well as in the management of internal politics. There were, amongst others, Kaiser, Nieupoort, Van Beuningen, and Van Beverningh. Kaiser, the pensionary of Horn, who had been despatched by the States to Copenhagen, was one of the most devoted friends of John de Witt's father, and was most faithfully attached to the son.

He had encouraged him to accept the nomination as grand pensionary, without disguising from him its perils, and had such confidence in him that he writes to him: 'I tell this to no one but you, who stand to me instead of all. *Tu mihi unus instar omnium.*'

Nieupoort, though eighteen years older than John de Witt, always showed the greatest deference to the young minister of the States of Holland. He had carried on his literary education in France, and had entered on public life as pensionary of Schiedam. He took an active part in the deliberations of the Great Assembly, and held at the service of his country the knowledge he had acquired of English affairs when he accompanied the ambassador Joachimi to London as his secretary. The feelings which he professed for the new

¹ Lotsij, *Cinq lettres du grand pensionnaire De Witt* (Dutch Almanack 1850, p. 77).

pensionary of Holland are shown in the following letter, which he writes to him on the subject of his nomination. 'It is good,' he says, 'to be able to apply to the navigator who stands before the compass for directions for those at a distance, that they may be enabled to follow him, especially in bad weather and with contrary winds.' Van Beuningen, the companion in years and in studies of John de Witt, long one of his most useful allies, and afterwards his rival, was born at Amsterdam in 1622. He was the son of the burgomaster of that town. Left an orphan at an early age, he had successfully pursued his studies at Leyden, and had been made a doctor of law. He showed no vocation for public life. It was the entreaties of his grandmother which induced him to accept the offers of the illustrious Grotius, an exile from the United Provinces and ambassador at Sweden for the French Government.

Grotius attached him to his person, and thus enabled him to profit under the best auspices, by his sojourn in France, for the completion of his political education.

Returned to Holland, and elected as secretary to the Council of Amsterdam, he gave himself up to his taste for solitude and his inclination to misanthropy, and retired to his seat near Leyden, depriving himself almost of necessaries.

There he became acquainted with a band of friends, who, under the leadership of the baker Oudaan, father of the poet of that name, professed a belief in the millennium—that is to say, in the earthly resurrection promised to the faithful, in which they were destined to enjoy a thousand years of happiness. He participated in all the exaggerations of their religious zeal. His relations succeeded in detaching him from them, and in awakening his ambition. This was soon satisfied by his nomination to the important office of pensionary of Amsterdam, which he obtained without any competitor disputing it with him.¹

Volatile and unstable, though not really false or perfidious, impetuous and impatient of contradiction, but redeeming these failings by the most brilliant qualities, he had inexhaustible resources of imagination at his disposal, assisted by

¹ See Roch, *Dictionnaire biographique*. Royal Library at the Hague.

gifts of speech by turns persuasive and seductive. Always prompt of decision, he was never at a loss to overcome difficulties or turn aside obstacles.

It is related that the Grand Pensionary De Witt, in the days of their intimacy, used to amuse himself by putting to him political problems, for the sake of the marvellous cleverness with which he would answer them. He was always ready with the most unexpected and ingenious methods of solving them, and the expedients which he would invent to avoid any failure often seemed to De Witt worthy of remembrance, to be turned to account in case of need.

The services which he could render in negotiations soon opened to him the diplomatic career. Sent in the first place to Stockholm, in the capacity of minister to the States-General, he gave free vent to those patriotic sentiments which he always retained with generous warmth. He watched with anxiety the vicissitudes of the war in which the republic was engaged with England. 'If we do not vie with each other in burning zeal,' he writes to De Witt, 'in ceaseless activity and great readiness, to make the most strenuous efforts ever hitherto demanded by the State, my fears will be more than I can express; and it might be that the disgrace and misfortunes suspended over our heads would go farther even than I dread.' In another letter he laments the indifference and ill-will of certain magistrates, who, in hopes of a speedy peace, put off the armament from motives of economy. 'If we are too keen to keep our property and our wealth when the republic has need of them,' he declares, 'we shall lose all.' 'How I wish you were here,' answers De Witt, 'to work with me, assisting me with your indefatigable zeal to obtain from the members of our Assembly those vigorous resolutions, and that open-handedness of which we have such need.' The confidence they had in one another appears in the following letter, which Van Beuningen wrote to De Witt to congratulate him on being nominated Grand Pensionary. 'I could not have received more welcome news, nor you a higher or more illustrious position, for the display of those gifts of wisdom, bravery, and goodwill, in the service of the State.

Neither could any other have been found upon whose shoulders so heavy and important a burden could have been placed with so much security, so that I have reason for the most hopeful prospects in the direction of the affairs of the State, and for the first time I begin to hope that the course which has appeared so desperate is not irremediable.' These assurances were a guarantee to De Witt of a devotion upon which he could safely rely.

Jerome van Beverningh, born in 1614, and destined, like Van Beuningen, to make himself a name in the service of the republic, was a grandson of John van Beverningh, who had been lieutenant-general of the army of the United Provinces during the war against Spain. His father, Melchior van Beverningh, who had served under Frederick Henry, had but a meagre fortune; but if he left little property to his son, he spared no sacrifice to give him the benefit of a thorough education. He also tried to encourage in him a taste for work, reproaching him 'for being too fond of walking, swimming, and amusing himself,' and blaming him 'for being too timid,' making great efforts that the young student might do honour to his family and his country.

After having completed his studies at Leyden, and married a young Flemish girl, Jeanne le Gillon, Jerome van Beverningh entered the Council of Gouda, and a few years later, at the age of six-and-twenty, he was chosen to represent the regency of that town in the Assembly of the States of Holland. He took an active part in the debates which culminated in the coup d'état of William II., spoke with warmth and firmness against the undertakings of the Stadtholder, and became one of the principal members of the Grand Assembly charged with the founding of the republican government. He made himself so marked by his powers of work and his eloquence, that Van Beuningen already counted him amongst the men of most value to the State who best merited the attachment and esteem of the country. When the Grand Assembly dissolved, the States of Holland sent him to sit in the States-General, which hastened on their side to recognise his services by confiding to him the important office of Treasurer-General

to the United Provinces. Called to take a great part in the most important negotiations, and fortunate enough to have been always successful, he showed, in the judgment of a contemporary, 'an uprightness and integrity which made him incapable of crooked dealing in anything that he deemed advantageous to his country.' No one was better disposed to share with De Witt the heavy task of government. On learning of his nomination as Grand Pensionary, he wrote to him: 'I confess, without compliment, that I rest my chief hopes on your great qualities, your courage, and your diligent care.'

Beverningh was fond of literature and science, which were his relaxations after public business. He had, besides, a taste for flowers, which he cultivated at Lokhorst, his country house, near Leyden. Later, in his retirement, he gave himself up to the study of botany.

His last office was that of curator to the University of Leyden, whose library he enriched by his gifts. He never departed from the most simple habits, carrying them even to affectation. He was not much to look at. It was only by the expression of his countenance that the superiority of the man could be recognised. He had a broad forehead, a long and slightly hooked nose, his eyes were bright and penetrating, his lips parted by a slight and melancholy smile. He had had his portrait painted in a cloak and black dress, with his hand on a table from which hung seven great seals of office, indicating the powers that had been so often intrusted to him. Underneath is an oyster, showing between its rugged shells a fine pearl, with these words of modest pride, 'Ne me quæssiveris extra.'

John de Witt had need of such useful allies in politics to overcome the obstacles which he encountered in the exercise of his functions. In fact, the prerogatives of his office made him master neither of the government of the Confederation nor even of the government of his province; and it was less by the authority which belonged to him than by his able use of power that he acquired and kept the direction of public affairs.

Nominated for five years only, but always re-eligible, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, who originally bore the title of Advocate-General, had been at first charged with the judicial affairs of the province.¹ His powers had been successively extended, and he became at the same time president and minister of the States. He sat in their Assembly amongst the nobles of whom he was the titled pensionary, having power to speak in their name, with right of priority. The ordering of the debates lay with him. Obligated to be present at each sitting, from nine to twelve in the morning and from three to six in the afternoon, the order of the day had to be followed as he fixed it. He communicated to the Assembly the motions of the members, called to order those who wandered from the point, and could always address the meeting either to plead the authority of a precedent or to bring the debate to a conclusion, though without a vote. He collected the votes and announced the result, embodied in a resolution which he read out the next day, or in case of necessity the same day, so that the Assembly might give it the force of law. On occasions when the majority of votes was insufficient, or where unanimity was required, he had the right of postponing the vote, and taking any measures that might secure agreement. He was thus the guardian of the law and the arbitrator of public peace. All matters concerning the administration of the interior of the province came under his jurisdiction. He watched over the observance of the laws and regulations, and took note of all demands made to the States, receiving all letters addressed to them, which he was bound to communicate. Having no concern with the finances, and unable in any way to deal with the funds,² he nevertheless had charge of the fiscal measures required for the interests of the public. He had also to render an account each session of the resources of the treasury. In the interval between the sessions he was associated with the councillor deputies, towards whom

¹ See *De Munere consiliiarii pensionarii Hollandiæ*, by Van Teta. Leyden, 1836.

² Oudaan, *Réponse justificative à Lambert Van den Bosch en faveur de Jean de Witt*. Duncaniana, 1672.

he filled the same functions as those with which he was invested in the Assembly of the States of the Province, and he carried on under their control the government of Holland.

As to the powers which he exercised in the States-General, they were shared with the secretary commissioned to assist him, especially the diplomatic correspondence, and were, moreover, subordinate to the necessity of an amicable understanding with the deputies of the other provinces. Nevertheless, they sufficed to make the Grand Pensionary of Holland the true head of the government of the Confederation. He sat below the president for the week, and when Holland presided took his place on his right. He formed one in all the committees of the Federal Assembly, and was in all the debates the representative of his province, in whose name he had always a right to be heard.

The direction of foreign politics, which had been placed in his hands, gave him the most extensive powers. The States of Holland, represented at the principal embassies and the greater number of missions by members of their Assembly, had easily caused the authority of their Grand Pensionary to be recognised in the conduct of negotiations. All diplomatic correspondence was to be addressed or communicated to him. In addition, he was in correspondence with the ministers of the foreign courts accredited to the United Provinces. If they were granted audience by the States-General, it was with the Grand Pensionary that they treated. De Witt, almost from his entry into office, was even authorised to transmit to them, if required, such communications as did not appear to him to be opposed to the public interests. His privileges were those of a minister for foreign affairs.

A provincial code specified the prerogatives and obligations of his office. The Grand Pensionary had to take an oath punctually to fulfil them, and was specially bound by one article to which John de Witt firmly adhered, and which enjoined him 'to preserve intact the rights and privileges of Holland, as well as the lawful authority of the States of the Provinces.'

On their side the States granted to John de Witt, on

the very day of his entry into office, an act of indemnity by which they undertook 'to guarantee him against all molestation, and to give him compensation for any damage'—an empty promise, which could not save him from a violent death, in return for a whole lifetime consecrated to the service of his country.

The office confided to him afforded none of those opportunities for ostentation and display which would have satisfied a vulgar ambition. The Grand Pensionary of Holland only received the moderate salary of 3,000 florins, to which, in the fifteenth year of John de Witt's office, the States added on his behalf an annual grant of another 3,000 florins, which was judged insufficient for his successor. He could accept neither pension nor present. No show of splendour gave any outward prestige to his functions. He took his place at all public solemnities after the members of the States of Holland and their councillor deputies, had no public patronage, and could recommend no candidate for nomination.

He was strictly tied down as to residence, and could not absent himself from the Hague even for a night without permission. Lastly, he could count upon few subordinates to assist him in the discharge of his duties; he had under his orders, at the office, only a secretary appointed by himself, but who took the oath to the deputy councillors, a director of the foreign despatches, and four writing clerks.

The Grand Pensionary occupied with them four small rooms in the court of the former Counts of Holland, which was now the Government House. The one which he used as an office, with an ante-room for his secretary, was on the ground floor at the corner of the building; it joined the Hall of the Councillor Deputies, and communicated by an inner staircase with that of the States of the Province. It looked on to the great square, the Buitenhof or outer court, which extends in front of the ancient edifice, and on to the basin or pond which washes its walls. It was occupied until lately by the president of the Court of Audit, and the internal arrangements remained unchanged. The old clock which was then still there may have once regulated the hours of the Grand

Pensionary De Witt. It was to these narrow quarters that the prime minister came each day to direct the government of the republic and to negotiate with Europe.

In taking possession of his office, De Witt accepted in anticipation its severe labours and heavy demands. A statesman in the noblest and fullest acceptance of the term, he had a genius for governing, and could use it with ease. 'He is young with regard to the importance and dignity of his office,' writes a contemporary, 'but he has great merits, which enable him to acquit himself of them.' He was helped by an extraordinary capacity for work, which astonished all those who came in contact with him. 'Being very studious,' writes the French ambassador, 'whereas most of his countrymen are extremely idle, he alone has a perfect knowledge of affairs, as they all pass through his hands.'

In one of the last letters which he wrote he apologises to Beverningh for writing to him so hurriedly, 'not having yet had a single meal, although it is nine o'clock at night.' An ambassador asked him one day how he found time to do so many things, when he spent the afternoon either in resting or paying visits connected with his office. De Witt replied 'that he ate and drank with moderation, put aside all thoughts of business when he went to bed, rose early in the morning, going to work without interruption, never doing more than one thing at a time, and taking for his motto, *Ago quod ago*.'¹ Sleep restored to him strength for the occupations of the day. Van Haren, who accompanied him in 1655 on his mission to Texel for the equipment of the fleet, was astonished at his powers of sleep in spite of so many pre-occupations. 'From my youth up,' he says, 'one blessing has never failed me: the moment I put my foot into bed at night, all cares leave me.'

His orderliness in business matters enabled him to get through them very quickly. His principle was to postpone nothing to the next day, and, he said, 'his day was never at an end till all was in order.' That he might never be taken unawares, he always carried about with him two note-books,

¹ Scheltema, *Mélanges historiques et littéraires*, vol. v. pp. 105, 106.

which have been preserved in the Archives, and which served him as political handbooks. One contained the various resolutions of the States of Holland and the States-General, regulating the principal attributions of the public powers; the other gave a table of the financial state of the country, and enabled him to see at a glance what funds were disposable.

He arranged his correspondence in the most methodical manner. All letters which he received, both private and public, and the copies of those which he wrote, or had written for him, were carefully collected each month in bundles. He used French, which was the diplomatic language, in the letters which he wrote to the ministers or ambassadors of foreign courts or to the different members of the House of Orange. Transferred after his death to the Archives, where they form a collection of forty volumes, and published, but only partially, up to the year 1669, John de Witt's correspondence brings to life again after two centuries all his titles to a great political renown.

It equally brings out in honourable relief the principal traits of his character. Setting aside all personal interest, and having only the public good in view, he was indifferent to all feelings of self-esteem, and would have had all his friends equally so.

Nine months after his entry in office, on the occasion of a question of precedence with Beverningh, the States ambassador to England, he wrote to him: 'I must say, that if I were in your position I would give no pretext for saying that I worked, not for the glory of my country, but for my personal reputation, although if it were a question of a matter concerning the interests of the national service, there is nothing that I would not take upon myself.'

Jealous only of the free exercise of his authority, he showed a dignified pride in causing his office to be recognised and respected. Responsible for the conduct of diplomatic negotiations, he desired to have the direction of them, and for the whole duration of his ministry he did not cease to demand that he should be supplied with copies of the despatches addressed to the secretary of the States-General.

These letters also show the scrupulous disinterestedness which regulated his conduct. The slightest suspicion of any failure provoked his youthful susceptibilities. They were shown on the occasion of the appointment of his brother-in-law Hœufft as bailiff of South Holland, when he received the complaints of the Council of Dordrecht. Not content with looking upon this appointment as an infringement of their privileges, they attributed it to personal interest, and attempted to have it superseded. De Witt, who was at that time only pensionary of the town, took offence at the accusation, 'which concerned him in the highest degree,' he writes, 'and seriously displeased him.' 'We consider,' he adds in his own name, as well as in that of the town deputies, 'that not only is our personal dignity assailed, but the good name of the town is also involved, and will lead to a diminution of our credit in the Assembly.' He announces his intention of publicly protesting against an attack which seems to be directed against himself unless it is retracted, and appeals to the evidence which can be brought forward 'in favour of his abnegation, and of his upright and sincere zeal.' An indomitable will, which by a special gift of nature was joined to much pliancy of mind, made the exercise of authority easy to him. 'Immovable as a rock,' so writes an English ambassador, 'he never turned aside from the object he was in pursuit of; no difficulty deterred him.' His power was constancy. His obstinacy was tempered by his careful observance of such connections of business and friendship as were necessary to the execution of his projects. Never falling foul of any opinion for the sake of contradiction, and, according to the testimony of the French ambassador, d'Estrades, so thoroughly master of himself 'that no one had ever seen him angry, as courteous and polite as he was bold and energetic, he was gifted with powers of speech both valuable and brilliant, joining persuasiveness to great clearness. He united to the charm of youth that weight of authority which usually belongs to a riper age, and which he had acquired from his very entry into public life by the integrity of his manners, the strict simplicity of his habits, and his firmness of mind.

To complete our knowledge of him, he must be depicted under the aspect of a young man, as he is represented in a family portrait. His thick black hair floats over his shoulders, surrounding a high and broad forehead. The face is oval; it only became rounded by age. The countenance, as a contemporary remarks, is of a southern type, and seems to bear the Portuguese characteristics. The eyebrows are very marked; the eyes, which are somewhat prominent, have that steady and searching look which is a sign of decision and determination. The cheeks, being somewhat hollow, give greater prominence to the nose, which is strongly arched, long, and with a sharp ridge. The mouth, large and well-shaped, furnished with a thickish moustache, betrays much shrewdness in the set of the lips. The hands have that look of high-breeding so prized in the seventeenth century; and the bearing is in perfect keeping with the pensive and serious cast of the countenance, a dignified and imposing presence without stiffness.

Such at seven-and-twenty was the young man who was to preside over the destinies of a free government, whilst directing the debates of an Assembly whose perfect confidence he enjoyed for nineteen years.

His great power was acknowledged both by the States-General and by the States of Holland, who voluntarily submitted to a superior genius. The son of a burgomaster was to take entire possession of the authority which had belonged to the stadtholders, and the interregnum of twenty years during which John de Witt filled the ministry had enough of glory for the United Provinces to enable them, finding in him a great minister, to dispense with a master.

CHAPTER III.

THE WAR WITH ENGLAND—THE ACT OF EXCLUSION—PEACE AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Rivalry between England and the United Provinces—Demands of England—Navigation Act—Naval Forces in the two countries—Tromp and Blake—Success of the English fleet—Death of Tromp—Obdam succeeds him—Financial and military steps taken by De Witt—Dispersion of the fleet of the States by a storm—Distress of the United Provinces—Portugal takes from them Brazil—Their diplomatic isolation—Their negotiations with Europe—Their relations with France—Embassy of Chanut to the Hague—Direction of foreign affairs by De Witt—Internal troubles—Hopes of the Orange party—Resistance of the States of Holland—Popular dissensions—Insurrection of Enckhuyzen—Dangers incurred by De Witt and his father—Efforts of Zealand on behalf of the Prince of Orange—The States of Holland stand on the defensive—The disturbances are appeased—Necessity for peace—Negotiations with England—Embassy despatched to London—Demands of Cromwell—Proposal for the exclusion of the Prince of Orange—Clause of compromise accepted by the States of Holland—Hesitation of the States-General—Imprudences committed in the negotiations with Cromwell—Conditional signature of the treaty of Westminster—Act of Exclusion imposed on the States of Holland—Private correspondence between De Witt and Beverningh—No complicity with Cromwell to be imputed to De Witt—Deliberation of the States of Holland—Vote for the Act of Exclusion—Irritation of the Orange party—Protests of the States-General—*Deduction* of the States of Holland drawn up by their Grand Pensionary—His conduct—His preponderating authority.

JOHN DE WITT was taking over the direction of the government under threatening auspices. Scarcely was the new government, of which the Grand Pensionary was to be in some sort the pilot, launched on the wide seas like an ill-fitted vessel, than it was driven amongst the rocks. At the very moment when the interests of the United Provinces were inseparably bound up with the preservation of peace, a foreign war took them by surprise at a time when they were not sufficiently prepared to carry it on, and domestic troubles, on the point of

springing up afresh, added the fears of civil war to danger from without. To these assaults of ill-fortune De Witt was to oppose a resolution and a coolness which left no room for weakness.

The United Provinces had found a formidable enemy in the ally on whom they appeared to have a right to count. After having concluded peace with the Catholic monarchy of Spain, they had entered upon a struggle with the Protestant republic of England, and the two governments, which a community of political and religious interests seemed to draw together, had entered upon a war which disappointed all expectations.

The first communications of the States-General with the sovereign Parliament of Great Britain, far from being favourable to a good understanding, had imperilled it. Of the two envoys sent by the English republic, one had not been granted an audience, the other, Doresläus, a Dutchman by descent, had been assassinated by some English royalists who had taken refuge at the Hague, and who revenged themselves upon him for the judicial murder of Charles I., one of whose judges he had been. Moreover, the last Stadtholder, William II., son-in-law of the unfortunate Charles I., had refused to sanction the recognition of a government which he could not forgive for the death of his father-in-law, and he felt himself encouraged in this refusal by the popular horror which such a crime had aroused. But after the death of William II. the United Provinces were no longer deterred by the same reluctance, and Holland, interested in peace for the sake of her commerce, easily obtained the re-opening of negotiations. A new embassy was sent in great pomp by the English Parliament. The two ambassadors, Lord St. John, lord chief justice, and Sir Walter Strickland, made their entry into the Hague in brilliant array, accompanied by a numerous suite. They were received by the States-General in solemn audience, with the most cordial marks of friendly consideration, and commissioners were immediately appointed to settle any differences which might delay the conclusion of the treaty of alliance.

War was to result from these preparations for peace. Elated by the downfall of royalty, the English Government had yielded to the temptations of an unbounded ambition. The Parliamentary envoys were commissioned to obtain the consent of the States-General to the union of the two nations, under the authority of a great common council, which should sit in England. This was to demand from the United Provinces the sacrifice of their independence, by obliging them to accept the laws of the stronger state. The association of a great, compact, and well-unioned republic with a confederation of provinces each of which had its own government, could only end in giving England the lion's share, as she had everything to gain, while the United Provinces had everything to lose. The States-General, therefore, rejected with one accord a proposal destined to bring the republic into slavery, or at least into vassalage. The demand which was imperiously made upon them to banish from their territory the sons of Charles I. and their chief partisans found no greater favour with them, and the Parliament began to show irritation at being unable to dictate to them its orders.

The resentment of the Orange party, attached by family interests to the cause of royalty, hastened the rupture of the negotiations. The parliamentary ambassadors, who had not been spared rude treatment during their stay, left the Hague in a haughty and threatening mood. Their departure was followed by two measures, which showed clearly the arrogant and aggressive policy of the English government. The Parliament announced its warlike intentions by the celebrated Act known under the name of the Navigation Act, which prohibited all foreign vessels from importing into England any merchandise except the products of the soil or of the industry of their own country; thereby aiming an irreparable blow at Holland, whose transport trade, valued at 40,000,000*l.*, was her chief source of wealth. The Navigation Act was followed by letters of marque given to English traders, authorising them to indemnify themselves for pretended damage inflicted on them by the navy of the United Provinces. Soon after, the seizure of seventy merchant

vessels, carrying the Dutch flag, showed the States-General that they had no longer any consideration to hope for, in spite of the departure of the plenipotentiaries whom they had accredited to the Parliament.

The accidental though almost inevitable encounter of the two fleets, commanded, one by Admiral Tromp, the other by the English Admiral Blake, who had seized on the pretext of the refusal or delay to salute his flag for commencing the attack, gave the signal for hostilities. Night alone put an end to the first encounter, which had lasted five hours. 'Your Highness,' wrote De Witt to one of the Dutch plenipotentiaries, 'will learn with displeasure that the beginning of a rupture, which it was so much to be desired might be averted by the prudence of one admiral or the other (God knows which was to blame), must now be feared with reason as an imminent misfortune.'

The attempts at negotiation had failed irretrievably. Eighteen months before he was elected Grand Pensionary, John de Witt was appointed to direct them, by acting as pensionary of Dordrecht on the committee of the Dutch deputies, to which they had been more especially confided. He complained of the ill-will and of the bad faith of the English Government, who put obstacles in their way, and, in order to facilitate a reconciliation, he insisted on the necessity of abiding only by the official reports in the States of Holland as well as in the States-General.

The last hopes of peace died away after the useless embassy of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, Pauw d'Heemstede. The States, 'knowing what a pledge of moderation he furnished, had sent him to join the other plenipotentiaries in England, in order to show by this selection how much they desired a reconciliation; and to do them a service he had overcome his reluctance to leave his country.' He continued without success for three weeks the most strenuous efforts for an agreement; and, not wishing to give them up, even after his departure from England, he commissioned the resident of the Hanseatic towns, the historian Aitzema, who happened to be in London, to continue the advances which had no longer

any chance of being favourably received. The arrogant obstinacy of Parliament, encouraged by popular irritation, hastened the declaration of war. The two republics, having begun by negotiating a treaty of alliance, entered into a maritime conflict—the United Provinces with sorrow and regret, England with joy and confidence.

The States-General had good reason to dread a naval campaign. All the advantages appeared to be on the side of England. Cromwell had reconstructed the fleet, which the civil war and the retirement of its officers had threatened to disorganise. He could put to sea 106 vessels, which he ultimately increased to 131. The 'Sovereign of the Seas,' later the 'Royal Charles,' which reigned over the ocean for sixty years, carried 112 guns, and was manned by 600 men. Other vessels, armed with sixty or eighty guns, were manned by crews varying from 300 to 500 men. The smallest had not less than from five to eighteen guns. The system of forced enlistment, known under the name of press-gang, gave facilities for the recruiting of an army of sailors, which might amount to from 16,000 to 30,000 men. The administration of the navy was entrusted to the Board of Admiralty, with absolute control over naval affairs. The fleet was placed under the orders of Blake, who, after having distinguished himself in the service of the republican party by raising at his own expense a band of partisans, had rapidly given proof of his high qualities as an admiral. His lieutenants, Monk and Dean, who up to that time had commanded as generals in the Parliamentary army, were assisted by experienced naval officers, among whom were Ascue, William Penn, and John Lawson.

The navy of the States-General was far from being equally flourishing. It had been neglected by the last Stadtholder, who was quite willing to sacrifice the maritime power of the republic to the maintenance of a land force. In spite of the pressing demands of the States of Holland, only fifty vessels were in a condition to put to sea at the beginning of the war. The year following, when, under the vigorous impulse of John de Witt, preparations were actively pushed

forward, the fleet comprised 130 vessels, but it still had only sixty-six line-of-battle ships, and the eighty-three merchantmen which formed a part of it could not hold their own against the English vessels, real floating citadels. Moreover, their equipment left much to be desired, both in the number and calibre of their guns, and in the strength of the crews. The flag-ship had only fifty-four guns and 250 men. The best armed of the thirteen other line-of-battle ships only carried from forty to forty-six guns, and from 130 to 150 men. Thirty-eight others carried only twenty-five guns, and the numbers of their crews did not exceed sixty or eighty. 'I cannot understand,' wrote the minister of the States-General at Stockholm, Van Beuningen, 'how it was possible to be so blind for so long a time as not to perceive the necessity of supplying this deficiency.'

The maritime population, who preferred fishing to fighting, were only enlisted with difficulty, and it was necessary to increase the number of sailors by soldiers ill-exercised in naval pursuits. The States-General had reason also to fear the defection of the Scotch regiments which they had taken into their pay, and whose fidelity it was the interest of the Parliament to corrupt. Finally, the supplies were incomplete, and would not allow the fleet to prolong a naval campaign. The Boards of Admiralty, which sufficed in times of peace for the ordinary expenses of the navy, found themselves unable to meet the cost of the war; and the States of the Provinces, obliged to take upon themselves the extraordinary expenses of the armament, were inclined to leave them to be borne by Holland. The division of power between the Boards of Admiralty, the States of the Provinces, and the States-General was fatal to naval operations, and encouraged the relaxation of military discipline.

The fleet of the United Provinces, which had acquired its fame in the war against Spain, had nothing in its favour but the superiority of its principal leaders, above all that of Tromp, called fifteen years before by the choice of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry to replace the lieutenant-admiral of Holland, Van Dorp. Tromp had distinguished himself on

several occasions by his victories over the Spanish fleet. Endowed with every military virtue, as far-seeing as audacious, he had gained the confidence and the attachment of his officers and men, who called him their father. His name seemed a presage of victory.

Still it did not depend upon one admiral to give an improvised fleet to the United Provinces, and the States-General were fated to perceive that their naval power had lost as much as that of England had gained. Events confirmed their most melancholy previsions. The first battle was lost by Vice-Admiral de With,¹ who behaved valiantly, but was deserted by some of his captains. 'There is wood enough in our country to make gallows,' he told them indignantly, with threats of not leaving their cowardice unpunished. The English fleet remained mistress of the sea. To revenge this defeat Lieutenant-Admiral Tromp, having under his command a picked staff including Vice-Admiral Evertsen and Rear-Admirals Floriszoon and Ruyter, was chosen to command all the naval forces. The republican party, which had dismissed him at the commencement of the campaign, because it mistrusted his attachment to the Orange party, was thus obliged to have recourse to his services to inspire confidence in the sailors. Tromp maintained his previous renown by surprising the enemy's ships near Dover. Having obliged them to put back into the Thames, he sailed victoriously over the British Channel, carrying as an insulting challenge a broom at his masthead.

At the beginning of the following year, 1653, a fresh battle, fought off Portland and continued obstinately for three days, left victory uncertain, but gave none the less a fatal blow to the resources of the United Provinces by the loss of nine line-of-battle ships and eighty merchantmen. The destruction of an English squadron surprised in the Mediterranean by Admiral van Galen proved only a passing advantage for the States-General; a more decisive engagement determined irrevocably the superiority of England. Tromp had advanced to

¹ Vice-Admiral Cornelius Witte de With, born at Brill of a plebeian family, was in no way related to the Grand Pensionary de Witt.

meet the enemy's fleet at the moment when it was enfeebled by the absence of Admiral Blake, whose squadron had just sailed north, and he had hastened to open battle, between Ramsgate and Nieupoort, with the two Admirals Dean and Monk, who had only about an equal number of vessels to oppose to him. At the first attack Dean was struck down by a cannon-shot, but Monk, throwing a cloak over his body, prevented the news from spreading, and the battle continued to rage with unabated fury without any marked result. The following day the two fleets continued the engagement off Dunkerque; the fleet of the States-General was overpowering that of the English, when the unexpected arrival of Blake, who had been hastily recalled, deprived Tromp of all chances of victory. After the most valiant resistance, he was forced to retreat to the shores of Holland, leaving the enemy in possession of several ships and of 1,300 prisoners. He immediately sent pressing demands for reinforcements and supplies to the States-General, and repaired with his principal officers to Flushing, to complain to the commissioners who had been sent there by the Assembly of the Confederation of the insufficiency of the naval forces placed at his disposal. His lieutenant, Ruyter, in spite of his well-known courage, declared that he would not return to sea if the fleet were not to be better armed. Vice-Admiral de With, called upon to give his opinion, set forth the danger with the rude boldness habitual to him. 'The English,' he said, 'are completely masters of us and of the sea.' These alarms were only too well justified; the enemy's ships blockaded the mouths of the Texel, and the fear of a landing kept all the inhabitants of the coast on the alert. But the States-General were not to be discouraged: they caused the damaged vessels to be repaired, and hastened the departure of fresh reinforcements. They then ordered Tromp to proceed to offer battle to the English fleet, in order to force it to leave the Texel, where it had shut up the fleet of Admiral de With. This manœuvre was successful, and enabled the naval forces of the republic to unite again.

After sustaining alone the pursuit of the enemy, Tromp, overtaken by the vessels which he had detached, gave the

signal for a fresh attack off Catwyck, in sight of Scheveningen, under the eyes of the population of the coast, drawn there by the excitement of a spectacle in which the destinies of their country were being decided. Confident of victory, he forced his way through the line of the English ships for the purpose of throwing them into disorder, but his retreat was cut off and he fell, struck by a cannon shot, while pronouncing these words, worthy of his great soul: 'It is all over with me; but do you keep up a good heart.' With him died those sudden inspirations of command which might have ended the struggle in favour of the United Provinces. After three obstinate attacks the two fleets separated, and withdrew, one to the Texel, the other to the Thames. Their losses were about equal; but the death of Tromp, which placed the whole republic in mourning, appeared more fatal than a defeat. 'We have lost,' wrote John de Witt, 'a sea-hero such as the world has seldom produced, and will perhaps seldom produce again.'

A successor had to be found. The States of Holland had the right of presentation to the command of the fleet, which was left to the apparent rather than the real choice of the States-General. They would gladly have appointed Vice-Admiral de With, who had deserved their confidence by his attachment to the new government; but they were aware how unpopular his haughty disposition made him and they shrank from the danger of displeasing the naval forces. Not choosing, however, to put any other superior officer of the fleet above De With, they placed their squadrons under the command of an officer of the army, the colonel of a cavalry regiment, Jacques d'Obdam, lord of Wassenaar, who belonged to the highest nobility of the province and could give them every pledge of political fidelity. John de Witt was sent to him with some of the members of the Assembly, to make known to him his nomination to the rank of lieutenant-admiral of Holland, which paved the way for that of admiral-in-chief. Obdam, 'accustomed to habits of expense far above his means, which induced him to ask for more than was offered him, and gave him in the event of a refusal the ad-

vantage of a grievance,' wished to place a high price on his acceptance. He demanded, besides the promise of a pension for his wife and children in case of his death on service, the right of nomination to the captaincies which might become vacant, and the promise of a speedy increase of pay. These demands prevented the title of admiral-in-chief being given to him, and he never was nominally invested with that office, though he exercised its powers. 'Never having sailed anywhere but on the canals of Holland,' writes a contemporary, 'he was obliged to make up by his good-will and courage for the naval experience in which he was deficient.'

The assistance of the most efficient lieutenants was assured him by the choice of his vice- and rear-admirals. One of the chief commands was given to Rear-Admiral Ruyter, who was appointed vice-admiral by the Admiralty of Amsterdam. Ruyter, who under the rude exterior of a sailor hid the soul of a Cincinnatus, offered a prolonged resistance to his promotion. The Grand Pensionary succeeded, however, by the persuasive force of his advice, in overcoming his scruples, and thus prepared the destiny of the great warrior, who was destined to restore in better times the wavering fortunes of the republic. The staff of the naval army might still therefore, in spite of the death of Tromp, sustain without disadvantage the burden of the war.

De Witt had, moreover, spared no pains in order that the republic should find all the resources necessary for its defence. The struggle with England had lasted fourteen months when he was definitively appointed Grand Pensionary, in the month of July, 1653; but he had taken preliminary steps to place the United Provinces in a position to sustain it, as soon as the provisional exercise of the office was entrusted to him. Wishing for peace, but at the same time determined to make every effort for the continuation of the war, he had begun by giving his attention to the finances, the low condition of which was an obstacle to fresh armaments. The war with Spain, prolonged for the purposes of conquest by the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, and which had only been terminated five years before by the peace of Munster, had left to the re-

public a debt of 140,000,000 of florins, bearing interest at 5 per cent., to which was added a sum of 13,000,000 for which repayment might be demanded. Opposed to fresh loans,¹ De Witt sought for supplies in voluntary contributions, in reductions in the public offices, and in the produce of duties on the import and export of merchandise. In order still more effectually to provide for the financial needs, he obtained from the States of Holland not only an increase on the income-tax, but also the levy of a tax on capital. In addition to this he tried to re-establish the directorial authority which was wanting, by obtaining for himself a power of superintendence over the conduct of maritime affairs. To supply the inadequacy of the naval forces the number of war vessels was increased to eighty-six; the Admiralty of Amsterdam bought two large ships constructed for the republic of Genoa; a purchase of vessels was in process of negotiation with Denmark, and the finest of the East India Company's ships were put in requisition. De Witt took with equal care the necessary steps both for the improvement of the artillery and for the enlistment of a larger number of sailors, to whom an increase of pay was promised. To provide against the defection of the Scotch troops in their service, the States of Holland exacted from them fresh oaths, and granted to the officers and men who were not disposed to take part against the Parliament permission to quit their service.

The States-General, on their side, exhorted sailors and soldiers to do their duty, promising assistance and pensions to the wounded and to widows, and offering rewards to any who should distinguish themselves in boarding and capturing the enemy's ships. They did not restrict themselves to these promises: in order to restore discipline, they threatened with death any captain who should refuse to obey the signal to attack. The examples of patriotism which were set rendered their task easier to accomplish. A professor of theology, Robert Junius, asked to be allowed to fulfil his pious office in the fleet. The secretary of Amsterdam, Gerard Hulst, offered

¹ During the first war with England there was only one loan of 800,000 florins, dated June 25, 1654.

his services as volunteer, and equipped at his own expense twenty-four sailors, undertaking to find them in pay and food. The minister of the States-General at Stockholm, Van Beuningen, declared himself ready to endure any sacrifices, whatever taxes and loans might be imposed, and offered to contribute to the amount of 6,000 florins towards the expenses of the war.¹

A fresh disaster rendered these preparations for defence useless. Before the fleet had taken the offensive again, it was attacked by a fearful tempest, which occasioned irreparable losses and destroyed the hopes of the new campaign. The United Provinces were not in a position to endure the prolongation of a war which caused them an annual outlay of 400,000 florins. The sources of revenue which had hitherto formed the wealth of the State, such as fishing and commerce, were almost exhausted; workshops were being closed, labour was suspended.² The Zuyder Zee had become a forest of masts. The country was filled with beggars; the richer families were emigrating to Flanders; grass grew in the streets, and in the town of Amsterdam 1,500 houses might be counted to be let. A contemporary pamphlet repeated in these words the public lamentations: 'Unfortunate Low Countries, whose ports are besieged, whose merchants are perishing; all manufactories are stopped, the fishing-boats are in harbour, even the herrings are not brought in. Confusion, dissatisfaction, and uneasiness increase day by day.' 'You may impose peace on any conditions you like,' was written repeatedly by the secret correspondents maintained by the Protector at the Hague, to Thurloe, Cromwell's chief minister.

While the United Provinces were engaged with England, they were attacked by other enemies, against whom they were unable to defend themselves. Their maritime defeats

¹ He offered these 6,000 florins for the fitting out and maintenance for six months of 150 picked sailors.

² A glove maker who engaged forty-eight workpeople had to become a workman himself. A manufacturer of black lace who had employed from 300 to 400 now only employed three.

encouraged the enterprise of a little nation which coveted their colonial spoils. Portugal was preparing to retake from them Brazil, which they had seized from her when she formed a part of the Spanish monarchy. Ill-governed for some years past by the West India Company, the Dutch possessions in Brazil had been forced to defend themselves against an insurrection of the native population, which was secretly fomented by John IV., king of Portugal, in spite of his pacific declarations. His ill faith having been discovered by the seizure of some intercepted letters, which are still preserved in the Archives of the Hague, the republic determined to take summary revenge; but the war with England, which deprived the States-General of the free disposal of their naval forces, assured to John IV. an impunity of which he hastened to take advantage. He fitted out a fleet of sixty ships destined to assist the insurrection.

The negligence of the Company had left the colony no means of resistance; everything was wanting—ships, troops, war materials, and provisions. Admiral de With, who had been sent to the relief of Brazil with a fleet of twelve ships and a landing force of 6,000 men, wrote in justification of his return: 'I would rather, if I had the free exercise of my religion, serve under the Turks than under the Company's directors on the Mount of Hunger.' It was thus he designated the reef of Pernambuco, the last place remaining to the Company. The subsidy furnished by the States-General had long been insufficient, and they could not continue to pay even that. Incapable of saving itself and deprived of succour, the colony was fated to perish, and the Portuguese easily completed its conquest.

Ruined by the war with England, peace was necessary to the republic to enable her to repair the misfortunes of which she was the victim, and peace was delayed by the severity of the conditions under which it must be purchased. To escape from the crisis through which they were passing, the United Provinces would have required the active assistance of some other Power; but no government was disposed to help them, and their isolation added to their distress. They were bearing

the penalty of the arrogant prosperity which had drawn upon them the envy of great and small States, who rejoiced secretly at their present misfortunes and were ready to profit by them. 'Courteous and amenable in times of trouble,' wrote Count William Frederick of Nassau, 'we are stiff and hold aloof when we think we have nothing to fear.' Thus, no sooner had fortune turned against the States-General, than friendships cooled down, and half-extinguished enmities began to flame up again. In diplomacy as well as for the multitude the vanquished are always in the wrong. It sufficed for Cromwell to have been victorious, for other governments, in spite of the revolutionary origin of his power, to have made him the most flattering advances, with a timorous and servile eagerness of which the example was set by the chief monarchies of Europe.

The direction of foreign negotiations imposed henceforth on De Witt a most ungrateful task. He had served his apprenticeship under the ministry of the Grand Pensionary Adrien Pauw, and the whole weight fell on him as soon as he succeeded to the office. Without heeding the disappointments which were in store for him, he set to work with courageous perseverance. His daily letters give proof of his activity and of the knowledge which he had acquired of all the political and commercial interests confided to his care. The republic found in him, from the first, the minister best able to restore to it, by the loyal skill of his diplomacy, the good-will and confidence of the other governments.

The United Provinces were above all interested in engaging Denmark and Sweden on their side. Masters of the Baltic Sea, these two Powers were the arbiters of war by their geographical position as well as by their maritime forces. The amicable relations between Denmark and the United Provinces were aided by the mutual good-will of their envoys. At the Hague, the Danish minister Ulefelt had gained the favour of the Dutch party by his republican opinions, and by the distribution he had made of the order of the Elephant to the principal deputies of the States of Holland, whose vanity he had thus flattered. At Copenhagen, the minister of the

United Provinces, Nanning Keyser, had contrived to gain so much influence that Queen Christina said, with a play upon the words, 'In Denmark, it is no longer a king who reigns, but a *Kaiser* (emperor), who does everything.' After attempting for a long time to remain neuter, the King of Denmark suddenly decided upon a bold stroke. Twenty-two English ships returning from the North, laden with merchandise, had entered the port of Copenhagen to await the escort which was to accompany them back to England. Frederick III. had them seized, and the cargoes sold for his benefit. This act of violence, which was equivalent to a declaration of war, obliged him to unite his interests to those of the States-General. By the terms of the stipulated convention the United Provinces were relieved from the annual sum which they had undertaken to pay to Denmark for the right of passage through the Sound; they supplied her, on the other hand, with subsidies, in return for which Frederick III. undertook to close the Baltic Sea to English vessels, and to provide a fleet for his new allies. But having equipped it at their expense, he took care to keep it for the defence of the shores of his kingdom, threatened with Cromwell's vengeance.

The favourable intentions of the King of Denmark with regard to the United Provinces were, moreover, rendered powerless by the hostility of Sweden, which appeared disposed to form an alliance with England. The throne of Sweden was occupied by a heroine of romance rather than by a queen. Christina, daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, succeeded him at the age of seven years, under the guardianship of Axel Oxenstiern, the chancellor of the kingdom. Arrived at the age at which she could govern by herself, she left the exercise of power to her chief minister, and set all her ambition on dazzling her contemporaries by the adventurous activity of her life, her passion for study, and the brilliant protection which she afforded to the greatest authors of all countries. Endowed, in place of beauty, with the charms of conversation, enjoying the homage paid her by all those whom she attracted around her, Christina divided her time between sport, the perusal of Greek, Latin and French authors, in

giving audiences, and in literary correspondence. Descartes and Huet, whom she received at her court; the Dutchman Hugo Grotius, who, banished from the United Provinces, had adopted Sweden as his second country, and whom she sent as ambassador to Paris; Naudé, who became her librarian; Saumaise, whom she would have liked to keep at Stockholm; Benserade, Scudéri, Chapelain, Scarron, and Pascal, who dedicated to her his calculating machine, were her habitual correspondents, and procured for her the reputation of a crowned Mæcenas. In the midst of this brilliant constellation, she loved to forget her sex and her rank, caring little if she lowered herself as a queen, and liking to appear a free-thinker in politics, as well as in religion and morals. She had received Cromwell's portrait, with some Latin verses by the poet Milton, and had become infatuated with the government and the person of the Protector. 'Your general,' she said, to the English ambassador, Whitelocke, 'is one of the most delightful of men; he has done greater things than any man of his time. I respect and honour him as much as any man living, and I beg you will tell him so from me.'

The States-General had attempted to divert her from this preference for their enemy, and the choice of their minister was calculated with a view to gaining her good graces. They sent to the court of Stockholm their most highly educated and well-read diplomatist, Conrad van Beuningen. The conversation of the young ambassador, which was as serious as it was brilliant, if we may judge by the tone of his diplomatic correspondence, was sure to make him welcome to a queen who had a taste for wit. Van Beuningen, who hoped to succeed in bringing her over to the side of the States-General by flattering her vanity, accepted eagerly her offers of mediation, but he soon perceived that the queen was too deeply engaged with the English Government for her arbitration to be of any value. Ruled by the Spanish minister, Pimentel, the declared enemy of the United Provinces, whom she had made her favourite; mistrusting the negotiations set on foot by the States-General to appease the differences between Sweden and Poland, she appeared only to seek an occasion for a rupture, and openly

pressed the King of Denmark to be false to the engagements he had made with the republic. Van Beuningen succeeded at least in delaying a declaration of war, which would have been a fresh disaster for his country. Christina only signed the treaty of alliance between Sweden and England with Cromwell's ambassador, Whitelocke, on the eve of her own abdication, and at the moment when the United Provinces were about to avert the danger of this coalition by a peace which every day rendered more necessary.

De Witt had continued to send advice to Van Beuningen, recommending him to employ himself in gaining time. Even at the period when he was only assisting the Grand Pensionary Pauw d'Heemstede, he wrote to the ambassador of the States-General at Stockholm: 'With regard to the circumstances in which you find yourself placed at this moment, in my opinion, you should on the one hand not strain the cord so as to break it, and on the other not leave it slack, which would look as if you despaired of success; and I may remark that, to sail between these two rocks without wrecking the ship requires great dexterity and circumspection, in approaching now one, now the other, according to the changes of wind and tide; there never was a more important occasion for the most skilful of pilots to display his art. May God send him a better wind than that which has blown hitherto, so as to bring him into a safe harbour; for I fear that with all his activity and vigilance he may not sail through without great difficulty.'

The States-General, having nothing to expect from Denmark and everything to fear from Sweden, had not been any happier in their relations with the Hanseatic towns, Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck, which might have materially assisted them by the number of ships at their disposal. They had negotiated ineffectually with their representative at the Hague, Leo Aitzema, a learned man as well as a diplomatist, who, at a later period, was the first to publish all the official documents relating to the history of the republic. They had no better success with the embassy which they sent to them, and of which Jacob de Witt, father of John de Witt, had the chief direction. The frequent letters which he exchanged with his

son describe the unfavourable reception given to his proposals. Interested in the ruin of the trade of the republic, the Hanseatic towns only sought to take advantage of her misfortunes to deprive her of the navigation of the Baltic. In spite of their declaration of neutrality, England never ceased to obtain from Hamburg all the munitions of war she required.

In the Germanic Confederation the disposition towards the United Provinces was uncertain, and had perhaps not received sufficient consideration. It was in vain that De Witt pressed for the despatch of an ambassador to the Diet. 'When their High Mightinesses employed me in Germany,' wrote Boreel, the minister of the States-General in France, 'I found that country very well disposed. The Germans would agree with us better than anyone, and would keep their word better. They are the nearest neighbours of the republic, and if they entered into a close alliance with her, she would not have to seek for one elsewhere.' But the difficulty of treating with so large a number of princes, often rivals one of another, and the fear of obtaining only at a heavy price useless and perhaps deceptive alliances, had made the United Provinces indifferent to relations with Germany. The disasters of the war which they were carrying on with England no longer permitted them to attempt successfully advances which they had failed to make at a more opportune time. They had kept aloof from the Elector of Brandenburg, who in his position of uncle to the young Prince of Orange incurred the distrust of the heads of the republican government. At Vienna the Emperor Ferdinand III., enfeebled by age, and governed by his favourite minister, Count Auersperg, displayed malevolent rather than favourable dispositions towards them. Moreover, they conceived themselves to be threatened by the army of observation of 4,000 men, which the princes and the towns of the circle of Westphalia were arming on their frontiers. They feared that Cromwell might gain these over by his subsidies as auxiliary troops for England, and dreaded a diversion which would have put it out of their power to defend themselves on land, while the maritime war absorbed all their forces.

The attitude of Spain gave them still greater uneasiness.

Obliged to recognise their independence, Spain could not forgive them for having conquered it. The proximity of her possessions in the Low Countries was the cause of constantly recurring differences between the two States. The establishment of a tribunal of joint authority or mixed court, to which these contests were to be referred, had been a measure of precaution which proved insufficient to settle them. The steps taken by the court of Madrid to obtain the alliance with Cromwell for which it was contending with France added to the precariousness of its pacific relations with the States-General. The ambassador who represented Spain in the United Provinces, Antoine le Brun, was treated with suspicion at the Hague, in spite of the great qualities which caused him to be called by one of his contemporaries 'one of the greatest statesmen in Christendom, and the most capable of comprehending the interests of all the nations of Europe.' Though he was as subtle as he was wise, he had taken a false step which the States of Holland could not forgive him. He had proposed to the Stadtholder William II. to come to his assistance in his coup d'état, and had offered him the forces of the king his master for the reduction of Amsterdam. The Prince of Orange had answered nobly that the King of Spain had no right to interfere in the affairs of the country, and that if he caused his troops to advance, the entire forces of the States would soon be seen united to oppose the foreigners. The ambassador, wishing to repair his first fault, had committed a second in demanding from the States of Holland a solemn audience in order to congratulate them on the agreement that had been concluded. As soon as they knew its object, they begged he would allow them to postpone it to another time; he was therefore obliged to return home, having received something of an affront. Determined to have his revenge, the Spanish ambassador opposed himself to all policy of reconciliation with the republic of the United Provinces.

The only power on which, under other circumstances, the States-General might have usefully relied had gradually withdrawn from their cause. France had ceased to be to them the ally of former times. The peace of Münster, which they

had concluded with Spain, had drawn upon them the resentment of the French Government. Their maritime commerce had been ruined by piracies for which they could obtain no satisfaction, and they were making preparations to take advantage of the troubles of the Fronde to exact reparation, when the disasters of the war with England, taking them by surprise, showed them the necessity for a reconciliation. Their ambassador at Paris received orders to negotiate a treaty which should assure them the support of which they stood in need.

They had been represented at the French court, since the year 1650, by William Boreel, baron of Vrendijke, who had begun life as advocate of the East India Company, and had become pensionary of Amsterdam. He had rendered the republic many diplomatic services at the northern courts, and subsequently in England, where he had been commissioned to offer his mediation between Charles I. and the Parliament. Having remained faithful to the House of Orange, in whose service his son was employed, he did not possess the confidence of the States of Holland, although he tried to deserve it by the regularity of his correspondence. He allowed himself to be easily persuaded by the hopes held out to him of a renewal of the alliance, and showed himself quite confident of the success of his negotiations. Attached to the traditional policy of alliance between the two countries, he professed the most royalist opinions in favour of the kingly descendants of Henry IV. Twelve years later, while still fulfilling the functions of ambassador to France, which he continued till his death, he reminded one of the ministers of Louis XIV., on the occasion of the birth of the Duke of Anjou, 'that in his early youth, in 1603, the valiant and benignant hand of the great King Henry had been laid on his head, and he had then received the royal benediction, which had attached him for ever to that king's posterity.'

The favourable dispositions of the French Government, on which Boreel thought he could rely, were more apparent than real. Deterred by the victory of the Parliament and the triumph of Cromwell from any idea of assistance to the royal cause, Mazarin henceforth turned his ambition towards

obtaining the good graces of the Protector, which he was anxious at any price to divert from Spain. But at the same time he did not wish to offend the States-General. He feared that, once abandoned by France, the United Provinces might make peace with England, and consent, in despair, to a union of the two republics, the proud dream of Cromwell. He was interested, therefore, in giving them sufficient encouragement to induce them to continue a war which served all his purposes by weakening, to the advantage of France, the two great maritime powers of Europe.

Having put down the Fronde and returned to Paris, he drew up the programme of this twofold policy. The French resident, Brasset, enfeebled by age, and suspected by the republican party on account of his attachment to the House of Orange, did not appear to him capable of being usefully employed in these diplomatic manœuvres. Instead of showing any willingness to reward the long and faithful services 'in which Brasset had grown grey, and almost blinded himself by continual labour for forty years,' Mazarin resolved to supersede him. To gain the confidence of the States-General, he made choice of an ambassador extraordinary, Pierre Chanut, who, having been treasurer of France at Riom, had entered upon a diplomatic career, and had already distinguished himself by his embassy to Sweden. His manuscript correspondence, of which the literary merit does him honour, reveals the qualities of the negotiator, as well as those of the moralist and the Christian philosopher. According to the curious narrative of a journey made about that time, 'he possessed all that was necessary to please in a republic, uniting to the rarest gifts of a mind at once acute and lofty, disdain of all pomp and vanity, and studying to live as a Stoic.'

Faithful to his instructions, Chanut made well-calculated advances to the States-General. He began by offering his hand to their deputies on his first day of audience, thus conceding a point of etiquette which his predecessor, President de Bellièvre, had refused to them the year before. He then 'exaggerated,' according to the very words of the despatches which he had received, 'the displeasure which the war with

England caused to the court of France,' wishing to prevent her from being suspected of encouraging the continuance of hostilities, but sufficiently circumspect to avoid at the same time any declaration which might give umbrage to Cromwell. He undertook, moreover, to reassure the chiefs of the republican government, who were uneasy at the preference hitherto shown by France to the Orange party, and he had the skill to establish close relations with De Witt, as well as with the principal members of the States of Holland.

Still, the latter were not disposed to be the dupes of his friendly overtures, and, having little hope of securing the doubtful support of the French Government, except by yielding to all its demands, they delayed, without interrupting, the course of negotiations. De Witt had early divined the aim of the French policy, which was to make use of the republic instead of helping it. Before he was appointed Grand Pensionary, he had already discovered the persevering projects of the French court which did not despair of bringing about the rupture of the peace of Münster, concluded by the United Provinces with Spain. With this object, France offered them the fortresses of Gravelines and Dunkirk, closely invested by the Spaniards, wishing thus to engage the republic in a conflict which would set her at issue again with her old enemies; but she had not as yet succeeded in gaining acceptance for her proposals. Mazarin renewed them with still greater persistence, and attempted to force on the States-General, as the price of the intervention of France against England, a declaration of war with Spain which would enable France, wholly or in part, to conquer the Low Countries. De Witt was too much impressed with the dangers of such a proximity to engage in an enterprise which would infallibly be fatal to the independence of the republic. Firmly decided to pursue towards France a line of conduct from which he never deviated, he did not choose, in order to ameliorate the present situation of the United Provinces, to sacrifice, to the detriment of their security, their guarantees for the future. Whatever might be the advantages of the French alliance, he preferred not to treat at all rather than to treat on conditions of which

he could not hide from himself the danger. Having determined henceforth to evade an agreement with France, he only continued negotiations in the hope of reaping some advantage, for the purpose of escaping from the difficulties of the war with England.

The United Provinces found themselves reduced, therefore, to counting only on themselves for the prolongation of an unequal struggle. Moreover, domestic troubles forced upon them the speedy conclusion of peace. Renewed party discords had finally weakened the republic, and were exposing it to the attacks of its enemies. Van Beuningen wrote from Stockholm to De Witt in 1652, before the latter was appointed Grand Pensionary: 'The State, in consequence of its stormy and turbulent deliberations on the stadtholdership, is in danger of falling into contempt abroad.' 'The bad effects of the prolongation of disputes about the government of the country,' he added in another letter, 'extend even to the court of Sweden, and cause us to be censured, and may, perhaps, encourage dangerous projects.' Ten months later, Beveringh confirmed this testimony. 'So much weight is laid in England,' he wrote from London, 'on the insubordination and disorder in our State, that our enemies think themselves amply assured that, with the addition of the troubles from without caused by their troops, we shall be reduced to subscribing to any sort of condition. As long as the now vacant stadtholdership had not been definitely replaced by the rule of Holland, a cornerstone was wanting to the structure of the republic.' 'This point of union, which we possessed by means of a head which at least guided if it did not command us, having been taken from us,' says a contemporary writer, 'it is to be feared that we may quarrel amongst ourselves, each town thinking only of its own interest, each province seeking only its own advantage, and each individual working only to aggrandise his family at the expense of the public.'

The system of government established by the General Assembly of the Provinces, which was contrary to the ancient traditions of the republic, did not appear to possess sufficient stability to resist the shock of a disastrous war. The House

of Orange found, in the trials through which the new government was passing, a return of influence and popularity, which seemed to threaten the dominant party with a sudden change of fortune. The loyalty of the people was being re-awakened. They were still filled with the recollection of the services they owed to the Princes of Orange, who had rescued them from the yoke of Spain, and they had been accustomed for so many years to live under their government, that they looked upon those of them who remained as entitled to exercise their authority. Thus, although the States of Holland would have wished them to fear the present prince as the son of the last Prince William, they only saw in him the heir of William, of Maurice, and of Frederick Henry; and his youth, which the States put forward as an obstacle to his elevation, only gave them a warmer feeling towards him. The Calvinist clergy studiously encouraged these inclinations. The Protestant ministers, displeased at having been unable to induce the General Assembly to share their furor of religious intolerance, had besides remained attached to the interests of the House of Orange, from a recollection of the services it had rendered to the reformed religion. They appealed incessantly to these services in reproach for the ingratitude of the republican party, and took upon themselves to offer public prayers for the young prince as heir to the offices of his father, without any regard for the sovereign power which belonged to the deputies of the province.

The States of Holland did not allow themselves to be intimidated by these evidences of regret and discontent. Determined to have themselves recognised as the legitimate successors of the Princes of Orange, they were anxious to suppress the honours that had been paid to former stadtholders. They demanded that an order to replace the prince's flag by that of the States-General should be addressed by the Boards of Admiralty to the commanders of the fleet, but did not succeed in having this resolution put to the vote in the Federal Assembly. They did not venture to proceed with it, from the fear of displeasing the sailors, who had just mutinied at Amsterdam with the object of claiming full payment of

their arrears, but they indemnified themselves by altering the city standards, on which the arms of the House of Orange had hitherto been preserved. They secured themselves also against abuses of the press and of speech, which might have endangered their power. By a resolution proposed by John de Witt, and written by his hand on the register of the States, they threatened with the severest penalties all authors and printers of seditious pamphlets and other publications. To prevent preachers also from making their ministry an instrument of disorder, they prohibited them from making any allusion to public affairs. One of them, Jacob Stormont, was even temporarily excluded from the pulpit, because, secretly encouraged by the partisans of the House of Orange, he had given free vent to invective and denounced the States of Holland as usurpers whom God would judge. As the pastor Hultius, one of those who by a rare exception appeared contented, wrote to John de Witt, 'the preachers must rest satisfied with their vocation, which is to study and to preach the word of God, and to assist the poor and afflicted as well as the sick.'

The grievous disappointments of the war with England rendered these precautions insufficient, by giving an irresistible impetus to popular discontent. The spectacle of the fleets of the republic, formerly victorious in Spain, and now vanquished by England, seemed a chastisement of the republican party, punished thus for having seized the power from the hands of the last heir of the Princes of Orange. The re-establishment of the chief authority, civil and military, in favour of the son of William II. was henceforth demanded as the sure pledge of better fortune. Pamphlets, profusely distributed, recalled to mind the example of France, which in the fifteenth century had driven out the English by the aid of a young girl. The partisans of the House of Orange invoked the remembrance of Joan of Arc, in order to obtain the same confidence for an infant in the cradle, whose ancestors were the founders and protectors of the independence of the country. A letter written to John de Witt by his uncle, Van Sypesteyn, is one long cry of distress, and shows with the impressiveness of an impartial witness the irresistible current of public opinion.

'I cannot conceal from you,' he writes, with a wealth of literary quotations which does not exclude sincere emotion, 'what I hear every day with great regret. There is a general expression and feeling that the country is betrayed, as if the prisoners of Loevenstein had given it up. It appears to me, having leisure to inquire closely into the feelings of the people, that the old spirit of disturbance or the ghost of the late prince has been sent once again on earth to set the whole country at war. This calamity is probably brought upon us by those who ought to sound the trumpet of peace and obedience amongst the people. What reason can this body of disloyal pastors have for acting thus? They dare to say publicly in their pulpits that the States order affairs for the worst, that their Noble Mightinesses desire nothing so much as that the navy of the State should be destroyed in order to bring about an agreement with England, and, what is still worse, that they know well that there will be an insurrection, of which they understand the object, and other things of the same nature. I do not think their Noble Mightinesses know all that is whispered amongst the people, and I fear that the conflagration may be lighted up before it is expected: *Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus*. Some are for the prince, some for the State; but the prince's party is now the stronger. What will become of us when the flame which is now smouldering shall have risen above the houses? For myself, I am not uneasy. *Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinae*. But I have defenceless children, and friends who are dearer to me than myself, and *quorum pars magna fuisti*, since there has been placed on your young shoulders too heavy a burden, beneath which old Atlas himself would bow his head.' These fears were not exaggerated. De Witt himself shared them when he wrote to Beverningh: 'Attempts are being made to fish in troubled waters and to give the people the impression that they can do without a master. This opinion is so generally received that there is hardly one inhabitant in a thousand who does not share it.'

Scenes of disorder, occurring on all sides, soon gave the signal, which seemed expected, for the overthrow of the govern-

ment of the States. At the Hague, bands of citizens who had met together on the occasion of the town fair, heated by the wine that they had drunk before the house of Count William of Nassau, fired on the standards, to protest against the removal of the arms of the House of Orange which had been taken away from them, and paraded with cries of 'Long live Orange! Long live Nassau!' It was in vain that cavalry were sent to pacify the tumult: they were forced to take part in the demonstration, and Major-General Brederode, who commanded them, could not himself avoid joining in it. To satisfy the rioters, the ancient standard had to be restored to the detachment which mounted guard at night at the town hall, and the States only prevented further troubles by sending for reinforcements of troops to the Hague. At Dordrecht and Delft also the Orange party gave free course to their demonstrations. 'At Rotterdam,' writes Cornelius de Witt to his brother, 'the magistrates cannot prevent the levies for the fleet being made in the prince's name.' At Haardigen the sailors, before enlisting, demanded that this concession should be made to them, and the States of Holland commissioned their councillor deputies to take the necessary steps to prevent it. In the whole of North Holland the partisans of the House of Orange gave public utterance to their hopes. Count William of Nassau, who had arrived in the island of Texel with some troops from Friesland to reassure the inhabitants threatened by a landing of the English, was received in triumph as a liberator by a population against which the States no longer dared to act.

At Enckhuyzen the ringleaders were quite reckless, and took a skilful advantage of the poverty to which the war with England was reducing the inhabitants. After provoking the populace to pillage the house of one of the burgomasters, they incited them to revolt, put them in possession of the arsenal, and forced them to depose the magistrates of the town. The regiments sent in haste by the States of Holland found the gates closed and cannon levelled on the ramparts, and the squadron that had conveyed them was obliged to retreat to the Texel, leaving the insurgents masters of the town. The

commissioners of the States were no better received. They were empowered to arrest the chief culprits, to send them prisoners to the Hague, and to impose submission. The withdrawal of the troops did not allow them to fulfil their mission. In spite of the dangers which threatened them, they approached the town without allowing themselves to be intimidated by the clamours of the rioters, who shouted to them from the ramparts: 'You shall not enter! Speak, speak!' They demanded that the gates should be opened to them, declaring that they had orders to speak to the magistrates. 'We are the magistrates,' answered the crowd; 'we are the burgomasters; we do not choose you to enter.'

Having vainly parleyed till the evening, they were obliged to depart. On the road they were overtaken by delegates from the town council, who held out to them hopes of an agreement with which they were obliged to be satisfied. The success of this insurrection was an example which might become contagious.

It was against John de Witt and his family that popular passions were let loose with the greatest animosity. The office of Grand Pensionary, which he had filled provisionally for some months, and in which he had distinguished himself by his energy, led him to be considered by the Orange party as the public enemy who must be got rid of in order to bring about the overthrow of the government of the States, which found in him its most valiant defender. His father, Jacob de Witt, who sat in the Assembly of Holland as burgomaster of Dordrecht, nearly fell victim to an assassin. As he was returning to his house, accompanied by Beaumont, the secretary of the States, he was addressed by a passer-by, who exclaimed, thrusting his fist at him: 'I will teach you to speak against the prince.' Some paces further on he was met, and informed that an unknown man had knocked at his door and produced a weapon, saying that he would make use of it that very evening. He nearly succeeded in carrying out his sinister project close to Jacob de Witt's house, where he was lying in wait for him. The States, informed of this attempt at murder, commissioned the Court of Justice to

institute criminal proceedings. At Rotterdam Cornelius de Witt did not venture to go out at night without an escort of his servants. Six weeks later, John de Witt, to whom the functions of Grand Pensionary had been definitively committed, was in his turn exposed to the resentment of a misguided multitude which threatened the States of Holland with a revolution.

Disturbances, encouraged by the growing audacity of the Orange party, had been recommenced at the Hague by a tumultuous mob of children, who, to celebrate the return of the young Prince of Orange, amused themselves by marching in procession with flags and paper scarves bearing his colours. Having caught sight of him at his windows in the arms of one of his nurses, they blew their trumpets in his honour and saluted him with acclamations. The States, fearing that this demonstration might be the signal for an insurrection, issued orders for its cessation; but the parents intervened, and when the fiscal or officer of justice, Cornelius Boys, advanced to disperse the mob, a barber drove him back with the most insulting language. The crowd pressed forward, but was driven back by the cavalry called together in haste, who threatened to resort to arms to force them to disperse; but under cover of the night the rioters returned to the charge. They divided into two bodies, one of which proceeded to wreck the windows of the house occupied by the fiscal, while the other indulged in the same excesses at the residence of the deputies of Dordrecht and Amsterdam, whom the Orange party considered as the principal chiefs of the republican party. The house of the Grand Pensionary narrowly escaped pillage. 'Where is that scoundrel, that traitor, that enemy of the prince?' was shouted at his door by the more furious, thus giving him at the very opening of his public career a foretaste of the popular hatred. The States, to protect themselves against this violence, sent for fresh reinforcements into the town. But they no longer felt themselves safe there, and, fearing the contagion of revolt, they were beginning to make preparations for abandoning the Hague, in order to sit at Delft, a fortified town where their Assembly could more

easily be defended against an insurrection. It would have been all over with the new government if the boldness of the attack had caused the energy of the resistance to waver.

The revolt of Zeeland rendered the danger still more threatening. The Orange party had regained possession of that province, and given the signal for a change of government in the town of Ter-Goes. The standard of Orange, floating on the tower of Middleburg, seemed to enjoin the States to give way to the popular wish. They submitted with a good grace, and commissioned their deputies to the Federal Assembly to demand the nomination of the young Prince of Orange as captain and admiral-general, in conformity with the resolution which they had themselves taken the previous year, but which they had hitherto left in abeyance. The deputies of Friesland and Groningen received this proposal favourably. The offers of intervention of the Princess Dowager did not suffice to reassure De Witt, who regarded them with suspicion. He replied 'that she would do better to testify her good-will by actions rather than by words, by persuading the magistrates of Zeeland to support her opinions instead of acting contrary to them.' He appealed with greater confidence to Major-General Brederode, to whom he thus testified his uneasiness: 'Sir, you have doubtless been informed of the communication which the deputies of Zeeland have made this day to the States-General, and since you know with what energy it is necessary to meet the bad impression which it has created, I have thought it my duty to address to you this request, in which I beg for your presence here to-morrow evening, in order that by your wise and prudent behaviour an evil may be prevented which later would be irreparable. I venture, therefore, to hope to see you here to-morrow evening, if you love our fatherland and the good cause, which I in no wise doubt.'

Threatened with the intervention of the States-General, while forced to defend themselves against the popular sedition, the States of Holland had, up to this time, not given way to any weakness. But the union of the members of their Assembly began to be shaken. The Council of Haarlem

having been gained over to the cause of the young prince, now pressed them to join it also. This proposal was confided to the charge of Ruyl, pensionary of Haarlem, who, after having been imprisoned at Loevenstein by William II., gave thus, by a sudden change of opinions, proof of his devotion to the interests of the House of Orange. This was to require the States of Holland to capitulate.

But scarcely was the breach opened by this attempt at defection than De Witt closed it again. Incapable of discouragement, he entered upon a conference with the pensionary of Haarlem, and succeeded in convincing him of the inopportune-ness and danger of his proposal. He persuaded him to offer remonstrances to the town council, which ended by taking them into consideration. An agreement once come to, the States of Holland took advantage of the energy with which they were led to take defensive measures against the other provinces. Fearing still that they might be disposed to renew the coup d'état of William II., they prohibited the town councils from receiving any deputations that might be sent to them, either by the States-General or by the States of the other provinces. At the same time, to justify their policy of resistance, they determined to make known in writing their opinion on the proposal of Zealand. A long report drawn up by their Grand Pensionary set forth the reasons which induced them to oppose any change in the constitution of the republic during the minority of the young Prince of Orange. In order to prevent the restoration of the offices of captain and admiral-general without showing any ill-will towards the son of William II., they put forward his tender age, which prevented his exercising the command on land and sea or taking any part in debate; they even claimed to be serving his cause in not giving him for his lieutenant the Count of Nassau, who might thus have been led on to supplant him. They drew attention also to the fact that since the republic was engaged in a maritime war the functions of captain-general of the army were useless. Finally, to show their distrust of the military power, they pointed out the dangers of too great authority being given to one man, who, being no longer

balanced by any counterpoise, could not fail to overstep the bounds of his duties.

They were not satisfied with discussing, they knew how to act. Their energy soon got the better of the revolt, which was now confined to Enckhuyzen, and was there braving the authority of the new government. De Witt made use of the powers of Grand Pensionary, with which he had just been invested, to press the adoption of conciliatory yet firm measures which might arrest this dangerous attempt at civil war. Obedient to his suggestions, the States of Holland, to bring back minds that had been led astray, and to put an end to all fears of reprisals, passed in favour of Enckhuyzen an act called Act of Non-prejudice, by which they guaranteed to the town the preservation of its rights and privileges. But they determined at the same time to send a garrison there, and despatched secretly some companies destined to force, if necessary, an entry into the town. A cleverly concerted stratagem prevented any resistance; a messenger from the States, introduced into Enckhuyzen, invited the people to the town hall, in order to make known to them the Act of Non-prejudice; the inhabitants collected in crowds, and the gates left undefended were occupied by the troops. The citizens, weary of the insurrection, received them favourably. No vengeance was taken; the more guilty fled or were condemned only to the payment of a fine. The submission of Enckhuyzen prevented the Orange party from taking up arms, and disconcerted the plan of attack of the other provinces, who had flattered themselves with ensuring in this manner the prompt success of a restoration. The States of Holland had recovered that power of resistance which in times of disorder is the safeguard of public authority.

By opposing thus with invincible energy a change of government, De Witt was saving his country from fresh and irreparable disasters, and giving it the chance of a peace without which the United Provinces were doomed to become the vassals of England. Surprised by an enemy who overpowered them by the superiority of his resources and weakened by their political isolation, they were sinking under the weight

of their trials. The continuation of a war whose disasters gave the most formidable encouragement to popular passions was not less fatal to the interests of the governing party than to those of the republic, attacked in its prosperity and threatened in its independence.

The speedy conclusion of a treaty could no longer, therefore, be delayed with impunity. But the bold attempts of the Orange party put obstacles in its way; they hindered Cromwell from an agreement by giving him cause to fear a restoration of the power of the family of Orange, united by close ties of relationship to the descendants of Charles I. 'We think it our duty to tell you frankly,' wrote Beverningh from London to De Witt, in a confidential letter, 'that we should not be admitted to negotiate, nor even to be heard in audience, if any public proposal were made to designate the Prince of Orange to the offices of his ancestors, which would infallibly be known here, and would render all our negotiations fruitless.' By disturbing the revolutionary power of the new ruler of England, the Orange party could not fail to make him intractable; the resistance opposed by the Grand Pensionary of Holland to all attempts for the restoration of the Prince of Orange was henceforth the chief condition of peace.

By turns renewed and broken off, the negotiations had followed their course in spite of the continuation of hostilities, and John de Witt, charged with their direction, did not hide from himself that 'on their issue depended the safety or the ruin of his beloved country.' He refrained, therefore, from any act of imprudence which might have made the two belligerent powers irreconcilable. In order not to abandon this reserve, he constantly refused to come to any agreement with the heir of Charles I., which might oblige the States-General to become parties to a restoration. Wishing to reserve full liberty of treating with Cromwell, he studiously avoided any occasion for taking part against his government. In vain did Charles II. propose to join the Dutch fleet, in order to induce by his presence the defection of the English ships in which many officers attached to the royalist cause were serving; the Grand Pensionary opposed an unvarying

refusal to his courageous offers of assistance. Some months later, the States, fearing that 'his arrival in the provinces might be dangerous,' determined that no foreigner of distinction should enter Holland without their authorisation. 'To bind the interests of the republic with those of the King of England,' they had declared already, 'was to put it out of the power of the United Provinces to make peace without him, and to perpetuate the war with the English, while they could more surely put an end to it either by their victories, or by the exhausting of their finances, or by reasonable proposals of peace.'

It was the more necessary to be on guard against any policy of adventure, because such a policy might strike an irreparable blow at the hopes of peace which had sprung up again. In the beginning of the month of February 1653, the Grand Pensionary Pauw d'Heemstede had been informed by private letters of the more conciliatory dispositions of Cromwell, whose ambitious designs were hindered by the prolongation of the war. This communication was made by Lieutenant-Colonel Dolman, an officer in the service of the United Provinces, who had been sent to England, where he had contrived to form useful connections. The States of Holland were immediately informed of this, and determined that a private letter making known their pacific desire should be addressed by the Grand Pensionary to the master of the ceremonies, Oliver Fleming. Dolman did not think this sufficient, and insisted on the necessity of a declaration being made by the States of Holland, more disposed than those of the other provinces towards the concessions desired by Cromwell.

De Witt took advantage of the powers that had just been conferred on him to support this proposal, and requested the deputies to bind themselves by an oath to keep the deliberations secret. He submitted to them a fresh letter drawn up by Ruyl, the pensionary of Haarlem, two copies of which were to be transmitted to England—one to the Parliament, the other to the Privy Council. They were invited thus to take the initiative, without awaiting the decision of the States-General, on whom the Orange party, interested in

carrying on the war against Cromwell, might have forced a policy contrary to peace.

This was the prelude to a separate negotiation, which De Witt was to resume at a later period. The deputies of Leyden were the only ones who opposed the vote, and demanded the previous consent of the States-General. The States of Holland, to avert a conflict, commissioned the deputies who represented them in the Federal Assembly to give the other provinces all the explanations they might ask for; but they determined, none the less, to take the initiative in diplomatic measures.

They reckoned on success for their justification. But the publicity given to their letter, which was printed in London under the offensive title of 'Respectful Petition of the States of Holland, imploring peace from the British Government,' disappointed their expectations, and the official correction which they insisted on gave them poor satisfaction. To cut short all hopes of conciliation, the Parliament declared in their answer that they persisted in treating only on the conditions proposed before the war, hoping thus to impose on the republic an act of submission to which it could not subscribe. The States of Holland were subjected thus to a humiliating disappointment, which disconcerted their premature attempt at reconciliation. Their precipitation, which had exposed the United Provinces to the arrogance of the English Government, did not fail to bring on them the reproaches of the Assembly of the States-General, and the deputies of Groningen demanded that the negotiations should be disavowed. Moderate counsels were on the point of being cast aside, when De Witt interposed and gained for them a hearing. In spite of the abstention of the deputies of three provinces who wished to refer the matter to their provincial assemblies, he prevailed on the States-General to reply to the Parliament, without weakness but without irritation, declaring themselves willing to appoint ambassadors who should have full power to settle the conditions of a new treaty.

An unexpected event had, moreover, made the States-General more favourable to a policy of conciliation. The

government of England had just been changed by a bold stroke. Cromwell had driven out the Long Parliament, in order to exercise with a high hand an undivided authority. The despotic usurpation of a man of genius became thus the climax of a revolution, begun by resistance to the arbitrary power of royalty. With the new dictator, the States-General might resume the work of pacification, which the Long Parliament had hindered. Thus, in spite of the demands imprudently set up by Zealand, the persevering persistence of John de Witt prevailed, and caused fresh negotiations to be entered into. He made, however, several ineffectual attempts to get them put into the hands of a single envoy, to be designated by the States of Holland. He was obliged to consent to the choice of several plenipotentiaries, two of whom were nominated by Zealand and Friesland, in their position of maritime provinces, and the other two reserved for the selection of Holland.

The States of Holland fixed their choice on one of the deputies of their Assembly of whose political experience they were assured, Nieupoort, pensionary of Schiedam, who was designated as chief of the embassy; with him was associated Beverningh, burgomaster of Gouda, to whom De Witt accorded his entire confidence. The States of Zealand and of Friesland delegated on their side Van de Perre, pensionary of Middleburg, and Jongesthal, a member of the court of justice in Friesland, who was devoted to the interests of the Count of Nassau, stadtholder of that province. They were charged with the duty of watching Nieupoort and Beverningh and controlling their conduct, but they were too wanting in diplomatic penetration to prevent the latter taking the lead in the negotiations, of which John de Witt had the real direction. His intimate connection with Nieupoort, and still more with Beverningh, assured him of the fidelity with which his instructions would be carried out. Distrusting the noisy zeal of Jongesthal, he wrote to them: 'If you remain in England I will send you a cipher. Do not let any of your commissioners see this letter, and do not leave it on your table.'

Before he was enabled to proceed with the work he was

anxious to complete, De Witt was nearly being compelled to give it up altogether. The speedy arrival in London of Beverningh, who was a week in advance of the other ambassadors, was of no avail in inducing Cromwell to change his policy. Beverningh, having been received in solemn audience by the privy council, represented to them in vain the interests of religion, government and commerce, that should have united the two countries. The original demands, to which the republic of the United Provinces had already refused to yield, were rigorously maintained; and when Beverningh had been joined by the other plenipotentiaries, the attempts at conciliation, renewed in numerous conferences, had no better success. Cromwell, not daring to disappoint the people of England of the proud dream of domination entertained by the Long Parliament, allowed the privy council to renew the original condition of a union of the two States in one republic, whose power would ensure the triumph of the cause of Protestantism in England.

Reduced to this extremity, the States-General were not at liberty to retreat from a continuance of the war, whatever its perils might be. The proposal of annexation, which Cromwell's government refused to abandon, was a threat of subjection, which did not permit negotiations to be continued any longer. The pacific policy, which De Witt had never ceased to uphold, was not consistent with a peace which would destroy the independence of the republic. Convinced of their inability to triumph over the haughty demands which were made them, the plenipotentiaries determined to return and give an account of the state of affairs. Two of them quitted England. In accordance with the advice of John de Witt, the two others, Beverningh and Van de Perre, remained in London, in the hope of bringing about a better chance of agreement.

The refusal opposed by the States-General to his inadmissible demands, soon showed Cromwell that he had gone too far. His political genius arrested him on the path he was treading, and the prudence of De Witt, who had opposed the recall of the two envoys left in London, enabled him to

continue the negotiations. He himself pressed for the return of the two other ambassadors, who were detained at the Hague for more than a month by the ill-will of some of the provinces, and as soon as the conferences were resumed he demanded a concession, which he flattered himself he should easily obtain. The proposals which he made to the plenipotentiaries consisted of twenty-seven articles. The union of the two republics was no longer exacted as a condition of the treaty; but other demands took the place of the incorporation of the United Provinces, which Cromwell gave up. The States-General were to recognise the maritime supremacy of England, by submitting to the payment of a right of fishery, and to the limitation of their naval forces in the British seas. Further, by the twelfth article of the treaty, they were bound to consent to another guarantee still more important for Cromwell, by engaging never to grant to the son of William II. the civil or military powers that had belonged to his ancestors. This exclusion, which had been hinted at some months before in the despatches of the French ambassador in London, gave the chief of the English republic a political security almost equivalent to that he would have obtained by annexation, by closing the way to his ancestral offices for the Prince of Orange, who, as a grandson of Charles I., would infallibly have put his power at the service of his family, for the purpose of replacing it on the throne of England.

Cromwell reckoned also on profiting by this clause in the treaty to perpetuate domestic rivalries and render irreconcilable the two parties who were disputing the government of the United Provinces. He persuaded himself, moreover, that the republican party would not hesitate to give him their cooperation, and thus oppose a fresh obstacle to the restoration of the House of Orange. Accustomed to stop at no scruples, he expected to find De Witt and his friends ready to accept with eagerness any sacrifice demanded from their country, provided their own political interests were satisfied. But John de Witt was too sincerely honest to lend himself to such a compromise. In spite of the accusations against his political conduct, which were not spared him, and which history, deceived by appear-

ances, has often repeated, the study of public and private negotiations makes it clear that, far from acting in concert with Cromwell, he offered prolonged resistance to his projects, and, if he ended by yielding, it was from wisdom and resignation, not from premeditated complicity.

Imperious as its attitude still was, the English Government had already drawn back; it no longer demanded from the United Provinces the sacrifice of their nationality. At the same time, while recognising their independence, it was determined to make them recognise its own supremacy, and to condemn them to a sort of political vassalage. The envoys of the States-General, in spite of their desire to hasten peace, could not lend themselves to such concessions. They declared that the United Provinces would not submit to the domination of England, nor to her intervention in their internal government. De Witt shared this opinion without reservation. When he became aware of the fresh demands of Cromwell, he wrote in a confidential letter that he considered the negotiations in a desperate condition. 'What we at any rate gain by them,' he declared, 'is that we now know what we have to expect from England, and can take our measures in consequence.' He announced these forthwith in the Assembly of the States-General, where he made a forcible speech, of which the historian Aitzema gives a summary. 'Holland,' he said, 'was determined to make use of all internal and external means of resistance. The internal means were the equipment of a powerful fleet, for which she would spare no expense. External means must be sought for in alliances with France; with Poland, in order to oppose her to Sweden; and with Denmark, to induce her to unite her fleet to that of the United Provinces.'

This appeal to resistance could not leave Cromwell indifferent, and he detained in London the ambassadors, who, despairing of obtaining satisfaction, were inclined to retire. A week had hardly passed before he had got rid of the Barebones Parliament, which he had caused to be elected, and had obtained for himself, under the title of Protector, the investiture of a power little short of monarchical. Freed thus from

the pressure of the republican party, he brought back his foreign policy to more reasonable views. He showed himself ready, if not to abandon, at least to modify his pretensions with regard to the supremacy over the sea which he claimed for England, and concentrated all his demands on the proposal of exclusion, which had become for him a dynastic question.

The negotiations were thus entering on a new phase. The more they brought into play the personal interests of the Protector, the more intractable he was likely to prove. Beverningh perceived at once that if he wished to obtain peace on better conditions, he must seek for a compromise, instead of opposing to every demand of guarantee a prompt refusal which would render a rupture inevitable. He contented himself with representing to Cromwell that the States-General would consider the abandonment of their sovereign rights too humiliating for them to consent to renounce them. The Protector, changing his tactics in order to arrive the more surely at the same end, declared that in default of an undertaking from the States-General, he might content himself with that of the States of Holland, hoping to detach them the more easily from the other provinces, as they had already excluded the young Prince of Orange from the government, by leaving the stadtholdership vacant.

Beverningh having rejected this first overture, Cromwell, without definitively waving his demands, appeared disposed to be satisfied with either a secret undertaking from the States-General or a resolution of the States of Holland, which would confirm the one taken some months previously opposing the re-establishment of the offices of captain- and admiral-general for the benefit of the son of William II. 'This latter expedient,' as Cromwell himself described it, was probably not agreed to, since the day following the interview in which he had suggested it to Beverningh he insisted on his first demand that the exclusion should be pronounced by the States-General.

It was probably in these diplomatic conferences that a new article was proposed, stipulating that every captain- and admiral-general should bind himself by oath to respect the

treaty of peace concluded with the republic of England. This clause, called Clause of Compromise, appeared sufficient to guarantee to the Protector the alliance with the United Provinces, and to make it a law of the State, to which the Prince of Orange must submit, if he were ever appointed to command their army and fleet. Cromwell replied to this offer of a compromise neither by consent nor refusal, 'although it had been communicated to the ambassadors on good authority and by a person of distinction.' His indecision gave an opportunity for the continuance of measures which would speedily have ensured the success of the negotiation, if they had not been interrupted by an act of irreparable imprudence.

The Protector, determined to be revenged on the King of Denmark, who, in confiscating some English ships in his ports, had made a declaration of war, had signified his refusal to allow him to be included in the treaty of peace. The plenipotentiaries of the United Provinces could not, without dishonour, consent to abandon their ally, and tried in vain to induce him to give satisfaction. After fruitless remonstrances, Beverningh and the two other ambassadors, Nieupoort and Jongesthal,¹ resolved on proceeding to ask for instructions from the States-General, and proposed to Cromwell to leave in London one of their number, with whom he might perhaps at length come to an understanding. Cromwell not having replied, they started, intending to embark, but they were soon overtaken by an envoy from the Protector, Dolman, who came to press for their return, begging them not to despair of an agreement. The plenipotentiaries, fearing by too great precipitation to encourage the measures which Cromwell was trying to impose upon them with regard to the Prince of Orange, and hampered by the responsibility of coming to a decision, stood on their guard against these advances, instead of trying to take advantage of them. Beverningh and Nieupoort would willingly have yielded to the request made to them, but their colleague Jongesthal would not hear of it.

¹ The third, Van de Perre, had died. De Veth, deputy of Zeeland, was afterwards chosen to succeed him.

He was obeying the suggestions of Bordeaux, the French ambassador in London, who, interested in delaying the conclusion of a treaty by which France did not appear likely to profit, encouraged the distrust of the deputy of Friesland towards his colleagues of the embassy by persuading him that they had, unknown to him, entered into secret negotiations with the Protector against the Prince of Orange. To baffle these manœuvres, Jongesthal threatened to depart alone, and thus obliged them to accompany him. Before leaving the country, the envoys of the United Provinces, hoping to avert Cromwell's displeasure, assured him that they would press the Assembly of the Confederation to give him a prompt answer; but he sent them word, 'that he threw on them the responsibility of the disasters which such a delay might cause, and that he held himself absolved before God and man.' The fault was committed. An inopportune hesitation had caused the favourable opportunity to be lost, and fresh tergiversations which disconcerted the latest efforts of John de Witt were about to render still more onerous the conditions of peace.

Immediately on their arrival at the Hague the plenipotentiaries gave an account of their mission to the Assembly of the States-General. Their report only bore on the clause of compromise; it ignored the overtures made by Cromwell to Beverningh, for obtaining from the States of Holland an undertaking to oppose the restoration of the House of Orange. The States of Holland foreseeing the danger that might arise from this sudden return, and wishing at any rate to avert its fatal consequences, sent pressing demands, in the name of the committee entrusted with diplomatic affairs, that the ambassadors should be sent back to England with orders to sign the treaty as it had been drawn up; but the other provinces had not the good sense to respond to this appeal. They distrusted Nieupoort and Beverningh, suspecting them of having taken the initiative in the secret proposals made to Cromwell. Besides, the majority chose to show their zeal for the Orange cause by rejecting or vehemently debating all the conditions which would place the government of the republic in subjection to the Protector. They caused it to be decided therefore, on

the demand of Guelders, that the articles of the treaty should be submitted for examination to the different provincial States. They thus created difficulties which were destined to bring about the rupture of the negotiations.

De Witt forthwith set to work to preserve his country from the dangers of this short-sighted policy. In accordance with his advice, the States of Holland, after a prolonged discussion, approved by a unanimous vote the draft of the treaty which contained the clause of compromise. In the hope of causing this example to be followed by the other provinces, they immediately informed the States-General of their determination. At the same time they hastened to communicate it to the Protector, to whom they sent back Beverningh, without, however, having obtained for him from the States-General the diplomatic powers indispensable for the fulfilment of his mission.

On his return to London, Beverningh immediately perceived that Cromwell's dispositions were changed. The ambassadors of the United Provinces had already incurred his animosity by hastening their departure when he wished to detain them. When he learnt that Beverningh was returning alone without being accredited by the States-General and without being authorised to recognise him, henceforward, in his quality of Protector, he considered himself offended, and gave free vent to his anger. It was skilfully taken advantage of by the war party, who pressed him to refuse all concessions. Beverningh imparted in a secret despatch to De Witt the anxiety he felt. 'Inclinations are not adverse, at least in appearance, but there has been much annoyance felt with regard to formalities, and I do not know how it is to be obviated. I was asked a thousand questions, why we left without signing, and why I returned alone, without any powers. I was not received by his Highness, and the only answer made me was that I was looked upon only as a private individual, and therefore no communications could be entered into with me. I fear that the article relating to the Prince of Orange is a stumbling-block. To remedy that which I am afraid to mention, I see no other means than to hasten affairs, or in the

event of a delay that I should be furnished with some document which will obtain me a hearing.'

This advice came late as it was, and the States-General made it useless by their prolonged disputes. The deliberations referred to the States of the Provinces were interrupted by constantly recurring obstacles. Encouraged by the pressing importunities of the ambassador Chanut, some of the provinces, zealous for a French alliance, insisted that France should be included in the treaty of peace, while Cromwell opposed an obstinate resistance to this demand. De Witt dissuaded the States-General from persisting, representing to them that 'their bark was too small to tow so large a ship;' and the French ambassador, to avoid the humiliation of an apparent refusal, declared haughtily 'that the King his master could quite well do without the services of the United Provinces.'

Other debates equally stormy threw further difficulties in the way of some of the conditions of the treaty and excited the distrust of the Orange party. The article which excluded from the territory of the two republics 'their common enemies' raised suspicions. Guelders, supported by some of the other provinces, demanded that it should be drawn up in such a form that it could never be made use of against the House of Orange. To reassure the Princess Dowager, De Witt represented to her that this interpretation did not enter into the Protector's views, and that, moreover, the States of Holland could never be induced to give their consent to it. The clause of compromise, instead of being looked upon as a concession to be obtained from Cromwell, did not itself escape; the States of Friesland, alleging that it obliged the commanders of the land and sea forces of the United Provinces to swear to observe the treaty of peace, demanded that the Protector of England should be bound by the same oath. The States of Zealand, fearing that any concession made to Cromwell would only provoke fresh exactions on his part, refused to consent to the compromise, unless an agreement was come to to reject any other condition that concerned the Prince of Orange. To overcome their resistance, this clause had to be added to the

treaty under the form of an additional article, so as not to form an integral part of it.

The Protector could not fail to be still further exasperated by the unseasonable delays which had till now prevented his government from being acknowledged. Friesland demanded that no congratulations should be addressed to Cromwell before the return of the two envoys of the States-General, Nieupoort and Jongesthal. Holland obtained with difficulty and after some delay an authorisation for Beverningh to precede the two ambassadors, in order to give the chief of the republic of England the satisfaction which he imperiously demanded. At the same time she urged the States-General to draw up the draft of the treaty in its definitive form, leaving the various provinces free to make their proposals of modifications, provided these modifications, if not accepted by Cromwell, should not be an obstacle in the way of the conclusion of peace. On the day when the votes were to be given, all was once more undecided. Zealand was represented in the Federal Assembly by only one of her deputies. Aylva, the deputy of Friesland, refused to accept the office of president; while of the two deputies of Utrecht one, Renswonde, objected to replace him, and the other, Amerongen, only consented to fill the office of president if the deliberation was dated the following day, on which the weekly turn for the presidency of his province came round. The system of government of the United Provinces, where, as the French ambassador wrote, 'everything, even the most secret negotiations, was done to the sound of the drum,' could not fail to keep Cromwell informed of these manifestations of ill-will, which appeared to him in striking contrast with the obsequious demonstrations of other governments.

The hostility into which the Orange party imprudently allowed itself to be drawn was still more intolerable to him. Already, while in London, Jongesthal had compromised the success of the negotiations by his ill-advised proceedings. 'Our colleague, Jongesthal,' wrote Beverningh to Nieupoort, 'in addition to the harm he has done both to the State and to us, has left a sad reputation behind him. The Protector has

been only too well informed, not only of his disaffection, but also of certain remarks which he has imprudently let fall, and which have been pertinently and fully reported. I have been told, for instance, that he was heard to say: In case of the non-success of the treaty, the State is determined to declare war against the Protector in person, while offering its friendship to the nation, which must have annoyed the Protector; and I am sorry for it with all my heart, since the State has never had any intention of the kind, and it is an absolute invention.'

In the United Provinces, hostility against Cromwell had never ceased to be displayed. At Utrecht, a pamphlet was publicly sold in which the Protector was nicknamed the 'Were-wolf.' To avert his resentment, the Court of Holland condemned to fine and imprisonment the authors of another libel, entitled 'Machinations of the Protector,' and forbade its being printed under pain of death. The Count of Nassau secretly encouraged these manœuvres and attacks. In spite of his apparent, rather than genuine, protestations in favour of peace, he advised resistance to the demands of Cromwell, from a fear that they might render him more insolent if they were submitted to. 'I consider him,' he wrote, 'as a traitor to his country and his king, and as a violator of the laws I maintain that no confidence ought to be placed in him.'

Regarding this as an insult, Cromwell renounced those conciliatory observances to which he had appeared disposed. Up to this time he had been satisfied with the communications made to Beverningh before the abrupt departure of the ambassadors; and if since the return of Beverningh the clause of compromise no longer satisfied him, he had not yet pronounced himself with regard to the new conditions concerning the Prince of Orange. The honours which he caused to be paid to the two ambassadors, Nieupoort and Jongesthal, when the latter returned to England with their new diplomatic powers, appeared even to give ground for hopes of the prompt conclusion of peace. The articles definitively settled upon in the conferences which had just been resumed only awaited

his signature, when suddenly his pretensions were again displayed with the most inflexible obstinacy.

At their very first audience with the English commissioners, the ambassadors of the United Provinces were informed that the treaty would not be signed till it had been revised. At the same time, Thurloe, the secretary of state, requested an interview with Beverningh, and represented to him that, if he wished to induce Cromwell to give up the article which stipulated for the exclusion of the Prince of Orange by the States-General, he must undertake that this guarantee should be given him by the States of Holland. The Protector thus returned to his original intention, and Beverningh, who thought he had obtained a definitive concession, found himself once more face to face with the same demand. He did not, however, weary of resisting it; but in the two fresh interviews which he had with Thurloe he was obliged to recognise the fact that he was henceforth only renewing fruitless efforts. A last attempt to move Cromwell was not more successful. Beverningh and Nieupoort represented to him without avail that they were not authorised to enter into any engagement with him in the name of the States of Holland. They could not avoid, however, transmitting officially to the Grand Pensionary the demand of exclusion, in order that it might be communicated to the deputies of their province, but they concealed this step from their colleague, Jongesthal, who would not have failed to frustrate it. Without as yet renouncing the vain hope of inducing Cromwell to yield, as they explained to De Witt in a private letter, they declared in their despatch, intended to be read to the States of Holland, that the necessity of either giving or refusing to him the concession which he demanded could no longer be evaded.

At this price only, Cromwell consented to sign the articles of the treaty, which the ambassadors would not leave any longer in suspense, from the fear of fresh changes; but he took care to state that he would not execute it unless he obtained the resolution of the States of Holland, 'under a form and within a period which he would consent not to limit too strictly.' It was the only concession which he would make.

While obtaining peace, the States-General were obliged to purchase it under disadvantageous conditions. To enable their ally, the King of Denmark, to participate in it, they guaranteed in his name the important sum of 2,450,000 florins, which was demanded of him as indemnity for the seizure of twenty-one English ships in the port of Copenhagen. No satisfaction was refused to England. They not only conceded to her the salute of her flag in the British seas, but also pecuniary reparation for an old injury of which she had never ceased to complain for more than thirty years, the execution of five British subjects convicted of having attempted to seize the island of Amboyna from the East India Company. Besides this, the States-General undertook to refuse any assistance, and even any shelter, to the enemies of the English Government; and the banishment of the royal family was also guaranteed to the Protector. Finally, to secure Cromwell from an abrupt change in the policy of the United Provinces, they were to cause every commander whom they should select as captain- or admiral-general to swear observance of the treaty.

The only advantage of the treaty for the United Provinces was the cessation of the war; but the prolongation of the war would have rendered the ruin of the republic inevitable. According to the testimony of a contemporary writer, who would not have allowed the opportunity to escape of incriminating the policy of John de Witt, if it had given any opening for his often passionate attacks, 'the treaty of Westminister is the only matter with which the English have to reproach Cromwell in what concerns the glory and interest of their nation. On this occasion he has sacrificed it to his own advantage, since he could, by continuing the war, have made Holland tributary.' Chanut, who, in the interests of France, had shown himself hostile to the negotiations, had ended by himself recognising the necessity of hastening their conclusion. 'The resumption of the war,' he wrote, 'would have given such advantages to England that nothing could have resisted her on the seas. I therefore thought that we ought to hope for peace; the evil is visibly great enough for

a respite to be desired, if we wish for the continued existence of this State.'

The necessity of satisfying Cromwell by conceding to him the Act of Exclusion was henceforth imposed upon the States of Holland. It weighed heavily on De Witt, as head of the government, and as the leader of a party. As head of the government, he must fear compromising Holland, and usurping for the advantage of one small province the diplomatic powers of the States-General. As leader of a party, he must recognise the danger of a compliance which subjected the United Provinces to the exactions of a foreign government, lately their declared enemy, and which would thus arouse the national feeling in favour of the Prince of Orange. The agreement between his public despatches and the private letters which he addressed to Beverningh, and some of which have been recently discovered, proves that he had made no compact with Cromwell, and suffices therefore for his justification.

The Grand Pensionary had been made acquainted, since the month of December, 1653, with the first overtures made by Cromwell to Beverningh and Nieupoort, to obtain from the States of Holland the vote of exclusion of the Prince of Orange. He had rejected them without a second thought. On January 2, 1654, before the ambassadors left London, he wrote to them confidentially: 'The point which concerns the Prince of Orange causes me the greatest anxiety. The promise demanded will doubtless be refused by some of the provinces, and will certainly not be obtained from the majority. Not only will it be out of the question for each province to give it separately, but it will be equally impossible to hope for it from the States-General. I had always reckoned, and had always wished, that the English Government should leave to the States-General and to each of the provinces the most absolute liberty of appointing the prince or not, according to their good pleasure; but admitting, on the other hand, that it should be equally at liberty, in the event of his appointment, to renounce the treaty or to continue to adhere to it.' This was the line of conduct which he proposed to follow, and during

Beverningh's stay at the Hague he had given him no other instructions. The letter in which Beverningh, after his return to London, complains 'of having been treated by Cromwell with want of courtesy and even with rudeness,' is sufficient to dispel any suspicion of connivance. 'I am glad to think,' writes De Witt to him, 'that the clause of compromise may bring about the success of your negotiation with the Protector on this subject, from what I fancy I noticed in your report.'

It was only the fresh communications made by Beverningh, after his return to England, which began to undeceive the Grand Pensionary. 'As regards the affair of the Prince of Orange,' suddenly announced the ambassador of the States, 'I think it will be allowed to drop; but I have no longer any certainty, this point not being included by the secretary of state, Thurloe, in the general declaration made by him as to the immutability of the articles of the treaty.' The imperious demands of Cromwell soon justified these alarms. They soon proved to De Witt the necessity of yielding; and not flattering himself with being able to resist, without hastening the ruin of the country, he prepared to make up his mind to submission, though still hoping to avoid it. The following letter, which he addressed to Beverningh, gives proof both of the last hopes which he retained and of the precautions to which he had recourse, in case no concession could be obtained. 'The English proposal, as it has been put before you,' he wrote, 'does not prevent a hope that the Act of Exclusion of the Prince of Orange may be avoided, and that confidence will be placed in the wisdom and good-will of their Noble Mightinesses, who, once the treaty concluded, will give no ground for fear as to their favourable dispositions. Still, if the hopes of peace should be desperate, in default of the said Act it would be necessary not only to certify this to the States of Holland, but also to renew this assurance at intervals of a few days, even if it should be in a despatch confided to a courier. It is also, in my judgment, very necessary that you should assure them continually, provided this assurance is in conformity with the truth, of the positive determination of the Protector, in order to dispel

the suspicions that ill-disposed deputies might attempt to spread.'

The superiority of John de Witt in political strategy suggested to him promptly the best steps to be taken for the execution of the plan which he had traced out for himself, and of which he foresaw all the difficulties. Without allowing himself to be deluded by the advantage that might be anticipated, and not wishing to be taken by surprise, he employed himself in preventing the Act of Exclusion from being, on the part of the States-General, the signal for the rupture of negotiations. Informed, in the last despatch addressed to him by Beverningh and Nieupoort, dated April 15, 1654, of the now irrevocable determination of the Protector, he delayed the communication which he had to make to the States of Holland, and pressed them to separate in order to take their Easter holiday. As soon as they had prorogued their sitting, he took advantage of the interruption of their meetings to obtain from the States-General the ratification of the treaty, in the form in which Cromwell had now approved of it. These latter having at length voted for it, without referring the matter to the States of the Provinces, he hastened to conclude the secret negotiation which held in suspense the conclusion of peace.

Recalled suddenly to the Hague by the councillor deputies whom De Witt had been obliged to take into his confidence, the members of the States of Holland were immediately required to take an oath of secrecy in the deliberation about to be commenced. This pledge once given, the Grand Pensionary communicated to them the letter of the two ambassadors, which he was commissioned to impart to them. The despatch informed the States of the conferences in which Cromwell had rigorously demanded the Act of Exclusion; it stated the fruitlessness of the efforts which had been made to dissuade him from it, and warned the States that the treaty of peace was dependent upon this condition and upon their consent to it. This unexpected communication was received with melancholy surprise. Complaints were made that the dispositions of Cromwell had not been foreseen or notified sooner.

An adjournment was decided upon in compliance with the demands of several deputies¹ who considered themselves bound to consult their town councils. To avert the dangerous consequences of this delay, which might compromise everything, De Witt contrived that the communication should only be made to the burgomasters of the towns, without being transmitted to the members of council, unless the burgomasters should refuse to pronounce an opinion. He demanded that the oath of secrecy should be imposed upon them, and obtained a decision that the debate should be resumed in the Assembly of the States at the end of three days.

On May 1 it was resumed in two consecutive sittings, with unusual vehemence. The deputy of the nobility who as president of the councillor deputies voted first was Count Brederode, great-uncle of the Prince of Orange. Desirous of retaining the chief command which he exercised in his capacity of major-general, he approved the proposal submitted to the States. His opinion was shared by five members of the nobility; four others, on the contrary, opposed it energetically, and one of them, attacking Vice-Admiral Wassenaar d'Obdam, who voted in conformity with Major-General Brederode, reproached him with 'wishing to be a little Cromwell.' The suffrage of the nobles was given in favour of the Act of Exclusion by a majority of only two votes, but at the second ballot, which took place at the afternoon sitting, the dissentients gave in their adhesion by a unanimous vote.

The deputies of Dordrecht, the principal representatives of the party opposed to the Prince of Orange, showed no hesitation. They considered that the blessings of peace would not be purchased too dearly, if it were necessary to sacrifice to them the cause of an infant prince; they added that this sacrifice would cost the States of Holland but little, as they had, since the death of William II., kept his son aloof from power. They therefore urged the Assembly to accept a condition which the disasters of the war did not allow them to reject without imprudence. The deputies of Amsterdam, strengthened by the unanimous vote of their town council,

¹ The deputies of the nine towns.

supported the deputies of Dordrecht, and their opinion, which represented that of the most important town in the province, was confirmed by the majority of voters, amongst others, those of Gouda and Rotterdam.

Still the defenders of the proposal found some adversaries who were determined to oppose it, notably Ruyl, pensionary of Haarlem, Wevelinckhoven, pensionary of Leyden, and Shagen, pensionary of Alkmar. The deputies of Haarlem gave the signal for resistance 'with persuasive eloquence.'

After accusing the ambassadors of having been guilty of dissimulation, in keeping secret the latest proposals that had been made them, they rejected the Act of Exclusion, as injurious to the liberty of the State and to the House of Orange. Declaring that they preferred to continue the war sooner than submit to this humiliation, they demanded that the Act should be communicated to the States-General. The deputies of Leyden, supported by those of Edam, proved even more intractable; they disputed the power of the Assembly of the Province to come to any decision which should compromise the interests of the entire Confederation, and demanded a preliminary agreement, at least with the States of Zealand. So decided a difference caused a hesitation in the minds of some members, who, before giving their opinion, desired to wait till the minority should give way to the opinion of the majority. The absence of several deputies prevented the closing of the debate, which had been resumed in the afternoon; it was definitively adjourned till the following Monday.

From the very commencement of this fresh sitting, the hopes of conciliation appeared to be frustrated. The absence of Major-General Brederode, kept away by illness, put De Witt in a difficulty. The deputies of Haarlem, Leyden, and Edam, renewed their opposition, in which they were joined by the deputies of Enckhuyzen, who had just arrived. The Act of Exclusion was none the less voted by all the other members of the States, though the representatives of the four opposing towns would not consent to yield. The deputies of Alkmar tried in vain to rally the Assembly to a unanimous vote, by demanding the definitive abolition of the stadtholdership rather than

the exclusion of the House of Orange. Their proposal not being supported, and a second ballot showing the same disagreement, the obstacles put in the way of a definitive vote appeared now insurmountable. The Grand Pensionary now spoke and tried to convince the dissentients by the most overwhelming arguments. He represented to them that by giving their verdict on the condition made by Cromwell to the treaty of peace they would vote for the safety or the loss of the republic. Unable to conquer their resistance, he demanded that a decision should be come to by the majority. The deputies of Haarlem and of Leyden contested the legality of this proposal. They declared that the resolution demanded of the States must be unanimous, because it concerned, at once, the question of peace and of a change of government; but De Witt persuaded the majority to proceed. Anxious to put an end to a debate which had lasted till half-past seven in the evening, he took advantage of this prolongation of the sitting to have conferred on the ambassadors the definitive authorisation for which they were waiting. He succeeded in carrying this, and immediately withdrew, to put in writing the Act of Exclusion. A few minutes later he returned to the hall to read it to the deputies. 'I think I have drawn up the Act,' he said, 'so as to preserve as far as possible the liberty of the State, and, at the same time to fulfil, if it must be, the desire of the Protector.'

The States of Holland, to satisfy Cromwell's demands, agreed to give no power, civil or military, to the Prince of Orange in their province. They promised, moreover, to refuse their consent to his nomination as captain-general of the forces of the republic, if it should be proposed to the States-General. Fourteen members of the States confirmed this resolution by their votes; four rejected it by a protest which they caused to be registered: one abstention, that of the deputies of Alkmar, completed the nineteen votes of which the assembly was composed. The Act of Exclusion was thus adopted by the majority of votes. The sacrifice so long delayed was accomplished.

The measures taken by De Witt narrowly escaped being

defeated by the imprudence of Beverningh in not sending him his secret correspondence by private hand. 'I was much embarrassed,' wrote the Grand Pensionary, 'by the receipt of your two letters, which were handed to me during the sitting, at the very moment when some members were complaining of the conduct of affairs and pretending falsely that information was kept back from the government. The packet was so large that it could not fail to attract attention, and certain members may demand that in future letters should be opened and read at the sitting. You would not see without distress all the private matters which we write of to one another in our intimate friendship read before the whole Assembly. You must therefore address your communications to me away from the Assembly, at my own house, and join to them a short letter which I can show to everybody.'

These precautions were not intended to conceal a double game, nor to abuse the confidence of the States of Holland. De Witt, after obtaining the full powers which authorised him to satisfy Cromwell, did not despair of evading the necessity for making use of them. His latest letters to the ambassadors, public as well as private, entirely exonerate him from any suspicion of servile compliance. The Act of Exclusion, instead of being addressed directly to Cromwell, was only sent to Beverningh and Nieupoort with strict injunctions to keep it privately in their own hands, and not to deliver it, or even to communicate it to the Protector.

The two ambassadors were to represent to Cromwell that Holland had pronounced herself strongly enough against the restoration of the Prince of Orange to render it unnecessary for him to demand the guarantee of a diplomatic engagement which would be the signal for internal divisions. 'We have thought well,' wrote De Witt to them in an official letter, 'to send you this Act, of which you may make use to bring about the conclusion of the treaty of peace, in such a manner, however, that before handing it over or letting any one know that it has been drawn up and sent to you, you shall use all possible diligence to cause the Protector to renounce it, and to induce him to be satisfied with the compromise. We have every confidence that you will

use all your efforts to act in conformity with these directions in a matter which is of such importance to the State.'

The Grand Pensionary repeated to them, confidentially, on several occasions, the same request. While the States of Holland were thanking them for not having yet delivered up the Act, and exhorting them to redouble their efforts to avoid doing so, he continued to let them know secretly that 'in the event of its being still possible to evade the Act, it would be so much the better.' He promised them, as a reward for the success of this negotiation the gratitude of the members of the Assembly, representing to them, without the slightest hesitation, that the latter were not satisfied with what had taken place. Beverningh and Nieupoort followed his instructions with the most scrupulous fidelity, without allowing themselves to be discouraged by the obstinacy of Cromwell, who, while causing peace to be solemnly proclaimed, had taken care to declare that the treaty would be null and void if the Act of Exclusion were not delivered to him. A fortnight after the vote in favour of the Act of Exclusion, they still persisted in resisting the demands of the secretary of state, Thurloe, pretending that they had received no fresh orders from the States of Holland. The following day, in an audience of three hours with Cromwell himself, they insisted afresh on his renouncing his demands, without allowing him to believe that the Act was voted, and tried to gain time, in the hope of being able to take advantage of some better opportunity. At length, not before May 29, they wrote that all their efforts had proved fruitless, 'the Protector holding to his opinion in so firm and decided a manner that he would prefer, sooner than change his mind, to resort to the last extremities.' Before they were constrained to yield, they had at least spared no effort of resistance.

The noisy opposition of the Orange party had prevented the Protector from making any concession, and it had now closed the last loophole which De Witt was keeping open. Scarcely had the States of Holland decided on the Act of Exclusion than, in spite of the oath of the deputies, the secret was divulged. 'It was beginning to be talked about with great excitement in the boats and coaches.' There remained

now nothing to be done but to release the deputies from their promise of secrecy. The deliberations of the States of Holland having thus been made public, the family of the Prince of Orange, taking advantage of the popular emotion which was being freely expressed, hastened to take measures for obtaining reparation. The Princess Dowager, who courted the good graces of the republican party, would willingly have held aloof; but she did not dare to show herself indifferent to the interests of her grandson, and found herself obliged to act in concert with her daughter-in-law. The two princesses, joined by the Elector of Brandenburg, who shared with them the guardianship of the son of William II., addressed remonstrances to the States of Holland, who contented themselves with receiving them with respectful reserve; they also appealed to the States-General to solicit their intervention. Count William Frederick, of Nassau, on his side, 'fearing that, the principal stem of his House being cut down, the branches might also be lopped off,' did not remain inactive. In compliance with his instructions, Hautbois, deputy of Friesland to the States-General, one of the most violent partisans of the Orange party, took the initiative in the Federal Assembly for the purpose of causing a protest to be registered against the private negotiation which Nieupoort and Beverningh had entered into with Cromwell.

The deputies of the other provinces, moved by this proceeding, pressed the deputies of Holland for explanations. The latter represented that they must consult the States of their province; and although the deputies of Groningen did not wish to accord them any delay for the purpose of clearing themselves, the debate was adjourned. When it was resumed, the recriminations against Holland were only embittered. The deputies of Friesland accused her in the most violent manner of usurpation and treason against the republic, 'without regard for the dignity either of the place in which they were speaking or of those to whom they spoke;' they pressed the States-General to take active steps to oblige her to give an account of her conduct. Notwithstanding the vehemence with which the Grand Pensionary replied, the

various provinces approved this proposal. The town of Utrecht alone refused to join in it, but was disavowed by the nobility and clergy of that province, who made common cause with the Orange party. The most hostile feelings were displayed. Some of the deputies to the States-General proposed to brave Cromwell, by proceeding to the immediate nomination of the Prince of Orange as captain- and admiral-general. Others demanded vehemently the recall of Beverningh and Nieupoort. More temperate counsels prevailed. After a stormy sitting, the States-General contented themselves with deciding that the two ambassadors should be desired to communicate the acts and orders which had been sent to them. The deputies of Holland offered in vain to inform the members of the States-General individually of the resolutions which had been come to by the Assembly of their province, in order to avoid a fresh debate, which would make the Protector more determined to exact openly declared submission to his wishes. The States-General wished to constrain the States of Holland to make known publicly the negotiations which they had carried on with Cromwell, and of which the latter claimed to have no account to render, alleging that they had made no engagement except for their own province.

As soon as the Grand Pensionary had informed them of this resolution, the States of Holland, who were sitting in permanence, took steps to prevent at any cost the annulling of the Act of Exclusion, being convinced with good reason that it would inevitably be followed by another war, from which nothing but disasters were to be expected. Believing themselves to be now relieved from all necessity for keeping terms, they determined, in spite of the protest of four opposing towns,¹ that they would authorise their ambassadors to deliver the resolution which had been sent to them. In a confidential letter dated midnight, which gives another proof of the sincerity of his conduct, De Witt wrote to Beverningh and Nieupoort: 'We have learnt with pleasure the efforts which

¹ Haarlem, Leyden, Enckhuyzen, and Alkmar. Three other towns were not represented at the sitting.

you have made to carry out our instructions in order to induce the Protector of England to be satisfied with the compromise concerning the Prince of Orange, and not to persist in demanding the Act which we have sent. But though we had desired and hoped for a more satisfactory result of these efforts, our very serious wish is that you should try once more, without any loss of time, and by every possible and imaginable means, to induce the Protector to consent to the compromise, and that in any case you should persuade him to declare himself clearly on this point, since it is of the highest importance for the service of the country that this affair should be concluded now without delay, either by the ratification of the Clause of Compromise or by the delivering up of the Act.'

On the day following, the States-General having re-assembled, the deputies of Holland declared, on behalf of the States of their province, that the latter had done nothing against the union; but they contented themselves with that justification, and gave no information as to the orders addressed to the ambassadors by the Grand Pensionary. The States-General, however, confirmed their resolution of the previous day, in which they enjoined on Beverningh and Nieupoort to communicate the correspondence that had taken place; but they consented to postpone sending their despatch till the States of Holland had had another opportunity of giving them spontaneous satisfaction. The States of Holland, whose precautions had been taken beforehand, had no longer any interest in refusing it. But while granting it, they nevertheless protested against this injunction and asserted their right to settle the interests of their province without the intervention of the Federal Assembly.

'Yesterday,' writes De Witt to Beverningh and Nieupoort, 'we clearly foresaw what has been determined to-day, that the States-General should write to you to order you to send them the copy of the Act of Exclusion of the Prince of Orange. Although we should have preferred, this matter not being within the competence of the province, that it should have happened otherwise, we do not desire that you should be placed

in the difficulty of choosing between our orders and those of the States-General. We therefore permit you, if on the receipt of the missive of the States-General the Act should be still in your possession, to send them a copy of it, observing, however, that we abide by the terms of our letter of yesterday, by which you will regulate your proceedings.' When the States-General met again for their evening sitting, thinking themselves now sure of being obeyed, they addressed, in all confidence, a despatch to the ambassadors, calling upon them to communicate to them without delay the Act of Exclusion. They never imagined that on the previous day the latter had been authorised by the States of Holland to deliver it into the hands of Cromwell.

De Witt had employed every proceeding, every expedient, and even every subterfuge to prevent the ambassadors of the republic receiving the orders of the States-General in time to obey them. Not only did deliberations, skilfully prolonged, delay the despatch of their resolution, so as to enable the messenger of the States of Holland to be beforehand by one day; but, in addition, by excess of precaution, it was drawn up in cipher, in order that the time required by the ambassadors for translating it should give them leisure to acquaint themselves, first, with the letter which conveyed to them the orders of the States of Holland. De Witt had not been mistaken in his able calculations. While Beverningh and Nieupoort, with the assistance of their colleague, Jongesthal, were causing the orders of the States-General to be deciphered, Beverningh received those of the States of Holland, and hastened to obey them. Having demanded of the Protector a final interview in which he renewed useless representations in the hope of inducing Cromwell to desist from his demands, he delivered to him the Act which he could no longer refuse him.

This proceeding anticipated the extreme measures which the States-General were preparing to take, of sending immediate orders of recall to Nieupoort and Beverningh. But, on the other hand, this abrupt conclusion of peace exposed the States of Holland to menacing attempts of vengeance. The

States-General commenced hostilities by protesting against the Act of Exclusion. The States of the Provinces, on their side, fearing the defection of some of their deputies in the Federal Assembly, took care to recall those who were suspected of being favourable to Holland. But a plan of campaign was wanting, and they confined themselves to isolated proposals, without being able to agree in carrying them into execution. Friesland denounced Beverningh and Nieupoort as state criminals who ought to be excluded from the assemblies of the republic, and joined with Zeeland in opposing the nomination of Beverningh as treasurer-general by annulling the votes that had been previously given to him. The States of Groningen urged the other provinces to address interpellations to Holland, and to send her each in turn deputations commissioned to insist upon the revocation of the Act of Exclusion; they proposed, moreover, a speedy retaliation by demanding the nomination of the young prince as captain-general.

The States of Holland were too well accustomed to such demonstrations to allow themselves to be taken by surprise. They began by appeasing the animosity of the two Princesses of Orange, to whom they showed the most courteous deference. The Grand Pensionary, accompanied by several deputies, visited them for the purpose of giving a fresh denial to the false reports which were being circulated to the effect that the States would concede to Cromwell their expulsion. He represented to them that the States had done everything to evade the necessity for the Act of Exclusion, and that they did not despair of finding another favourable opportunity of proving their good-will towards the House of Orange. These conciliatory measures diverted the two princesses gradually from the path on which they had at first entered, and the fear of irrevocably compromising the cause of the young prince soon induced them to moderate their behaviour.

The Princess Royal, yielding to the pacific counsels of her wisest adviser, Beverwaert, gave notice that she intended to confide in the affection of the States of Holland, in the hope that they would eventually take her son under their protection. She promised to do nothing 'to solicit the provinces or to stir

up the people,' and she quitted the Hague in order to proceed to Spa. The Princess Dowager, in her studied eagerness to appear satisfied, paid no heed even to proprieties. According to the report made to John de Witt, she declared 'that she was so devoted to the public interests, that if she had had a voice in the Assembly of Holland, having regard to the explanations which had been given her, she would not, in this matter, have voted differently from the States themselves.' She did not follow up the protest which she had thought herself bound to make. When, therefore, the Count of Nassau, now isolated, prepared to make a fresh appeal to the provinces in favour of the young prince, the friendly representations of the States of Holland sufficed to arrest the execution of this project.

Having nothing to fear for the moment from the Orange party, the States of Holland took advantage of their restored security to justify themselves by an appeal to public opinion. A report, in which De Witt was chiefly concerned, was carefully drawn up by a committee, with the consent of all the members of the Assembly except the deputies of Leyden and Edam. It was read to the States of Holland in two consecutive sittings of the States-General occupying five hours. The States of Holland offered not to publish it if the other provinces would consent on their side to the suppression of their documents; but passions were too much involved for this offer to be accepted, and the report was forthwith ordered to be printed. A Latin translation appeared necessary to ensure for it diplomatic publicity, and Thysius, the professor of elocution at Leyden, was commissioned to prepare it.

This long report, as learnedly worked out as a mathematical demonstration, and known under the name of the 'Deduction of the States of Holland,' was the manifesto of the political party represented by this Assembly. It began by setting forth the negotiations carried on with Cromwell to evade the Act of Exclusion, and imputed their failure to the imprudent hostility of the States-General, which had deterred Cromwell from coming to an agreement. It disavowed all responsibility on the part of the States of Holland, alleging the tardy communica-

tions of the ambassadors, without, however, mentioning the first despatches which the latter had addressed to the Grand Pensionary. The most conclusive arguments were then cleverly adduced to prove the necessity and the legality of the convention concluded with the English Government; according to this statement, the Act of Exclusion had been the means of safety for the republic, threatened with being the victim of a fresh war if Holland had refused to Cromwell the concession on which the Protector had made the treaty of peace to depend. Moreover, this Act did not exceed the powers which the provinces had often used, without having ever been accused of failing in their federal obligations. In making agreements with Cromwell, therefore, relative to the government of their province, the States of Holland might with good reason claim that they had only consented to a private convention which in no way concerned the rights of the other members of the union, or those of the States-General.

They were not satisfied with exculpating themselves. Having made it clear that they had not abused their rights, they were bent upon proving that they had made good use of them. The Act of Exclusion was defended, in the second part of their memorandum, as a measure of wise policy, which would ensure to their province the guarantee of its liberty against any attempt at subjection, and would thus prevent a renewal of the attempt of which the last Stadtholder, William II., had nearly made them the victims. No consideration was omitted in bringing forward the testimony of history to the imprudence of nations who had favoured the elevation of a princely family, and the dangers of hereditary offices under a republic were carefully compared with the guarantees given to the confederation of the United Provinces by a government of assemblies.

With regard to the services rendered by the House of Orange, the States of Holland recalled the fact that they had been already largely remunerated; to prove that they had amply repaid their debt of gratitude, they had recourse to the statement of a calculation which resembled a bill, and which marred this last argument by reasonings as paltry as they

were misplaced. They concluded by referring to the preference shown by the States of Friesland and Groningen to the Count of Nassau over the son of William II., in order to prove that they had nothing to reproach themselves with when they refused him admission to power. In thus attaching the Act of Exclusion to the principles of their constitution, instead of making it the mark of their submission to England, the States of Holland claimed to have their resolution considered not only as irrevocable but also as spontaneous, and flattered themselves that they saved their dignity in not appearing to yield to the injunctions of England.

Fresh acts of imprudence on the part of the States of Zealand brought this humiliation upon the republic. The complaints and demands which they addressed solemnly to Cromwell, without any possible hope of his consenting, in consideration of them, to renounce the Act which had been delivered to him, could not fail to irritate the Protector. They were followed accordingly by two letters, in which, under cover of friendly assurances, he notified to them that a rupture would follow the revocation of the Act of Exclusion. This declaration had been suggested to him by De Witt, who, even at the risk of failing, by too obsequious an attitude, in the reserve which he had hitherto maintained, was bent upon preventing the danger of fresh debates. 'There is no surer mode of ending them,' he wrote to Beverningh, 'than for the Protector to let it be clearly known that he only ratified the treaty in order to obtain the Act of Exclusion, and that he will from this time forward steadfastly refuse to renounce it.' In thus forcing Cromwell to declare himself, the Grand Pensionary no longer had any need to fear encouraging him in his exactions; he only wished that the other provinces should not be allowed to think that they might with impunity escape from the obligations which had been imposed on Holland. He was restraining them from a hazardous policy and rendering fresh services to the republic by the care he took that Peace, his beloved child, should not perish in its cradle. The other provinces were henceforth obliged to refrain from useless displays of annoyance. 'The affair and

the child will now be left to sleep,' writes Beverningh to De Witt. This prevision was justified. The States of Guelders, after determining that they would demand from the States-General the nomination of the young Prince of Orange as captain- and admiral-general, postponed their proposal. The States of Zealand, not following up their resolution of claiming the powers of Stadtholder for their province, contented themselves with publishing a refutation of the 'Deduction of the States of Holland;' and, in order not to appear to be wanting in arguments, the latter responded to their complaints by a fresh manifesto.

Thus terminated this negotiation, which gave to the United Provinces the blessing of peace, without which the safety of the republic would have been irrevocably compromised. Holland had entered upon the war unwillingly, and might with good reason impute it to the provocations of the Orange party. She bore the chief burden of it, and suffered its hardest blows. Could it be expected that she should prefer to be its victim sooner than sacrifice the rights of the Prince of Orange, while she had reason to fear that the elevation to power of the son of William II. might be fatal to the government which she had chosen and which she wished to preserve? Such an effort of virtue has no place in any, even the most scrupulous policy. De Witt and Cromwell may assuredly have had identical interests, but it suffices for the honour of the Grand Pensionary that he was no accomplice of the Protector's exactions, and history may record as a final verdict the opinion of Chanut, the French ambassador, who, after severely criticising his conduct, did him tardy justice in the following terms: 'Any idea of a preconcerted understanding between the chiefs of Holland and the Protector was only a false supposition. The truth was that, by reason of the inferiority of their forces and of their resources, the States had ceased to place any hopes of safety in their troops and ships. They were running after peace with such precipitation, that they preferred to accept it in a hurry and at a disadvantage rather than to be deprived of it.'

However this might be, by consenting to the Act of Ex-

clusion, when forced to accept it, Holland had entered into engagements which deprived her of the free possession of herself, and rendered her dependent on a foreign government; she had, moreover, struck a blow at the integrity of the diplomatic authority which should have belonged to the States-General. She might in future incur the reproach of having lent herself, if only by submission, to a policy of abasement which affected the whole republic. It was necessary for her to wipe it out in future by repairing the humiliations of a disastrous war. Having purchased peace on onerous conditions, and imposed it on the other provinces, she could only secure pardon for it by making it salutary and glorious for the confederation. John de Witt's ministry was to enable her to accomplish this work of reparation.

It had needed nothing less than his dexterity and perseverance to triumph over the troubles of war abroad, and at the same time to restore internal peace. His great political qualities had quickly ripened in the stern school of events. His adversaries could not baffle him; he opposed to them, as he writes to Beverningh, 'sometimes the most imperturbable coolness, sometimes the most impetuous vivacity, without finding any difficulty in giving sharp rejoinders.' The reports of the sittings in the States confirmed by contemporaneous testimony show him always in the front, now bearing the burden of the most important debates, in which he took part with indefatigable ardour, now resisting the force of passions which spared neither his policy nor his person, now making unheard-of efforts to extricate himself from the difficulties in which he was placed by the letters of the ambassadors, constantly skirting without injury the rocks of a double negotiation, at once public and private, in which he might be accused of having gone beyond his instructions, equal to everything and providing for every contingency, without ever allowing himself to be discouraged or disconcerted.

The instrument of his power was the Assembly which had chosen him as minister, and over which he had succeeded in gaining the mastery. If the least weakness were displayed, he left no stone unturned to restore discipline and enforce obe-

dience to himself. The deputies of Dordrecht to the Assembly of the States having abstained from voting at an important sitting, when justification of the Act of Expulsion was in question, he wrote to his father: 'I cannot refrain from saying that I saw with extraordinary surprise (at a moment when peace and the liberty of our dear country would be clearly in danger, without the prudent and wise assistance of brave men) the conduct held by the town of Dordrecht, which had never before failed on similar occasions. She sent here deputies who, at the mere name of a child and the receipt of a letter from two widowed princesses, allowed themselves to be intimidated to such an extent that they ignominiously deserted their post without its being possible to induce them to resume the places which had been assigned to them, in spite of reiterated interpellations. I ask you, therefore, very humbly to act with still greater vigilance towards them, for a vessel may sometimes, from the inexperience of an ignorant pilot, strike against a rock or a sandbank in such a manner that the most skilful navigator would not know how to get her afloat again. If we had not been so much on our guard here, we should doubtless never have returned to port.' The authority which he exercised with such vigilant and imperious energy was due to the confidence he had gained and on which he could depend. On one occasion, when he had repulsed in the Assembly of the States-General the violent attacks of the deputies of Friesland, indignantly denouncing 'their false assertions, their injurious invectives, and the violence of their language, such as civilised men should never make use of towards one another,' he was obliged to justify himself for the words which were imputed to him. The States of Holland, as soon as they met, interposed to take up his defence, and gave him public testimony of their approbation. He found thus steadfast support in their loyal co-operation.

It was for their cause that he had never ceased to work, and he had now ensured its success by depriving the States-General of all power over their independence, and thus freeing them from any subjection to the federal authority. From the very outset of his political career he had declared

himself the resolute partisan of this autonomy, which constituted the programme of his policy. 'The English,' he wrote to one of the ambassadors in England a year before he was nominated Grand Pensionary, 'call the United Provinces a republic; but these provinces do not form one republic. Each province by itself is a sovereign republic; the United Provinces ought not to be called a republic, in the singular, but federal, or united republics, in the plural. The vote in favour of the Act of Exclusion was an assertion of this provincial sovereignty. By putting it beyond the reach of attack, De Witt had ensured the duration of the government whose destinies were confided to him, and which possessed in him the brilliant personification of a great statesman.'

CHAPTER IV.

A GOVERNMENT GAINING IN STRENGTH. THE REPUBLIC AT
PEACE AT HOME, AND POWERFUL ABROAD.

The Orange party—Its chief the Prince of Nassau—His forces—Change of government in the province of Overysseel—The republican party—It is led by the States of Holland—Ascendency of the Grand Pensionary de Witt—Appointments to military commands, to the courts of justice, to important offices—Relations of the States of Holland with the States-General—Disputes about jurisdiction—Trial of John de Messen—Vacancy in the post of major general—Agreement between De Witt and the Prince of Nassau—Projected union—Internal government of Holland—Reduction of rate of interest—It is the work of John de Witt—Obedience enforced on the army and the clergy—Administrative measures—Attempt at coalition amongst the other provinces for the nomination of a major-general—It is baffled by the States of Holland—Their supremacy—First re-election of John de Witt as Grand Pensionary—Foreign relations of the United Provinces—Naval expeditions—Prosperity of the Colonies—Embassy on behalf of the Waldenses—Dangers of a rupture with France—De Thou ambassador at the Hague—Disputes settled—Negotiations with England—First mission of Downing to the Hague—Mutual concessions—Continuation of hostilities with Portugal—Wars in the North—Fears of the preponderance of Sweden—Alliance with the Elector of Brandenburg—His defection—Intervention on behalf of Dantzic—Treaty of Elbing—Invasion of Denmark by the King of Sweden—The States assist Denmark—Their naval victory in the Sound—Mediation—Convention of the Hague—Battle of Funen gained by the Swedes—Capture of Nyburg—Treaty of Copenhagen—The United Provinces resume their position in Europe.

FREE governments do not permit statesmen the easy satisfaction of crushing all opposition, but impose upon them the necessity of constantly renewed struggles. The Grand Pensionary de Witt was not to be spared these during the whole duration of his ministry; he had still a hard task to accomplish before he could succeed by persevering efforts in making Holland mistress of the government of the republic.

The Orange party, humiliated and irritated by the Act of

Exclusion, was not disarmed, and had found at last the chief who had till now been wanting. Count William Frederick of Nassau, after long hesitation, had at length responded to its appeal. Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, grand master of the artillery, having recently married the daughter of the Princess Dowager and become thus the uncle of the young son of William II., he had shortly before obtained from the Emperor of Germany the title of prince. Notwithstanding the authority conferred on him by his birth, his parentage, and the offices he held, he had remained in retirement after the death of the last Stadtholder. The indecision of his character, which is referred to by the French ambassador, Chanut, had prevented him from placing himself at the head of the Orange party. He had, moreover, been discouraged by the ill-will of the Princess Dowager and by the persistent hostility of the Princess Royal, who both feared to find in him a rival to the Prince of Orange. The popular discontents provoked by the war with England and the negotiations relative to the Act of Exclusion had, however, aroused his ardour. The occasion seemed to him favourable for appearing once more on the scene and for displaying his loyalty to the House of Orange. 'If you will not give anything to the young prince,' he wrote to one of his confidants, 'you must at least take nothing from him, which would be unjust, cruel and wicked. It is not to be found in any history that merits so great have ever been recompensed by such heathenish ingratitude. Spain, who was such an enemy of his House, has not deprived the prince of the hope of one day being one of her generals. Thus, you may see from this how unjust those of the republic have been towards the prince in declaring him excluded from the offices of his ancestors. Neither will God leave them unpunished, I am certain; the Almighty hates ingratitude too deeply.'

To prepare the way for the success of a restoration the Prince of Nassau was forming plans both of alliance and of insurrection. He was trying to interest Mazarin in the Orange cause by declaring himself in favour of a treaty with France, and was negotiating to obtain the support of the

French Government in the event of Cromwell, not content with the engagements entered into with him by Holland, choosing to interpose with the view of obliging the States-General to acknowledge the Act of Exclusion. At the same time that he was trying to obtain the assistance of foreign troops he was redoubling his efforts to levy partisans in North Holland, which he visited under pretence of inspecting some of the garrisons. He tried to gain over the commander-in-chief of the army, Major-General Brederode, who wrote to John de Witt: 'He made so much of me that I was ashamed, and made me speeches that I should not like to confide to paper.'

He was surrounded in the States-General and in the States of the Provinces by numerous deputies who encouraged his hopes. In Guelders his most faithful ally was Huyghens de Zuylichem, the former secretary of William II., deputy of Arnheim, who had enriched himself by three consecutive marriages, was allied to the family of the late Grand Pensionary of Holland, Pauw d'Heemstede, and combined literary merits with all the qualities of a statesman. Beside him the two brothers Henry and Alexander Van der Capellen, sons of the former chancellor of Guelders, distinguished themselves by their devotion to the interests of the Orange party. In Zealand, Peter de Huybert, afterwards pensionary of the province, and John de Mauregnault, deputy to the States-General, were even more ardent and kept up a constant correspondence with the Prince of Nassau. In the province of Utrecht, Reede van Renswoude, who had filled the post of ambassador at the court of Charles I., rallied around him all those who regretted the ancient power of the Stadtholders. In Overijssel, the two most trusted representatives of the Orange party were Mulart, whose wealth aided his ambition, and Ripperda, one of the negotiators of the Peace of Munster, who by his marriage had become a member of one of the principal families of the nobility of Holland. In Friesland and Groningen, the more zealous of the partisans of the House of Orange encouraged one another. Amongst them were, in Friesland, Van Haren, whose son afterwards rendered signal services to the republic by his embassies, and Joachim André,

one of the confidants of the Prince of Nassau; in the province of Groningen, Eisenga, burgomaster of the town, Hautbois, burgomaster of Sneek, and Clant, 'a quiet and peaceable man, whose private interests attached him to the Princes of Orange.'

The temper of the various provinces, who could not forgive Holland for concluding the peace with England, raised the hopes of the Orange party, and seemed to guarantee their co-operation. Friesland and Groningen, of which provinces the Prince of Nassau was Stadtholder, had everything to gain from the success of a restoration that would secure for their deputies the good offices of those in authority. Zealand, on her side, might almost be called a fief of the Princes of Orange on account of the great domains they possessed there, and which constituted them the greatest landowners in the province. She had already declared herself more than once in favour of the nomination of the young prince, either as Stadtholder of the province or as captain- or admiral-general. She had, moreover, been foremost in her remonstrances against the Act of Exclusion and had never ceased to demand its revocation. Guelders, which, as an ancient duchy, had a right to the highest rank in the States-General, showed jealousy of the preponderance of Holland; the families of rank who inhabited that province regretted the offices about the court and the military commands they had enjoyed under the Princes of Orange. The two orders of the nobility and the clergy of Utrecht shared the same sentiments and in 1654 demanded the immediate restoration of the stadtholdership of the province. In Overijssel, an eager party, impatient to hasten events, had the young prince chosen as Stadtholder, and nominated the Prince of Nassau to act as lieutenant during his minority. The Princesses of Orange, informed of the resolution of the States of Overijssel, eagerly testified their gratitude, and the Orange party held itself in readiness to take advantage of this election in order to reinstate the son of William II. in the offices of his ancestors.

This fresh coalition seemed to threaten Holland with the most formidable dangers. But it was speedily dissolved by

unavoidable dissensions of which she took advantage. In Zealand, the town of Middleburg separated itself from the Orange party, from the fear that a change of government would render inevitable a renewal of the war with England, from which her trade must suffer. 'Most of the partisans of the House of Orange, especially in this province,' we read in a contemporary letter, 'have only followed the popular current, for just now, the people being tired of crying "Long live the Prince!" and being occupied with other matters, fresh disputes have caused the old ones to be forgotten.' As for Guelders, she was skilfully won over and her interest satisfied. The States of Holland had already made themselves answerable for that province's share of the subsidies due to the King of Denmark; they now proposed to her the most advantageous mode of repayment, by charging her with the maintenance of three Dutch regiments, and thus putting at her disposal several military appointments. In the province of Utrecht, the capital, which kept up a close intercourse with Amsterdam, declared itself against the nobles and in favour of the republican government. In Friesland, the jealousy of the nobles and the obstinate arrogance that was displayed endangered the authority of the Prince of Nassau. In the province of Groningen, the rivalry between the town and the country, the *Ommelandes*, dominated the great interests of political parties and roused the animosity of local passions. Finally, in Overijssel, the resistance of Deventer opposed to the provincial States assembled at Zwoll the authority of a rival assembly in which certain members of the nobility and some deputies of the smaller towns took their seats. The Orange party could not have taken possession of the province without the aid of military intervention, which the States of Holland hastened to prevent. They began by forbidding the officers commanding troops in their pay to take any part in these dissensions, and prevailed on the States-General to issue the same prohibition to the troops of the other provinces. The civil war was thus kept within limits, and could no longer be either extended or prolonged.

By the aid of these domestic quarrels and 'with the help

of concessions which they knew how to make,' the States of Holland gained numerous partisans. The burgomasters of the large towns, amongst others Beck, burgomaster of Deventer, and Holek, burgomaster of Utrecht, declared themselves on their side, as did the principal deputies of Guelders, such as Dorth, one of the wealthiest men in the province; Bronkhorst, who aspired to the reputation of being independent of the prince and preferred to be distinguished as the friend of liberty, and Van Ghent, 'who, without any great fortune, lived in a somewhat expensive style, and who, having hitherto been on very intimate terms with the Princess Dowager, now appeared disposed to change sides with the change of fortune,' the Grand Pensionary de Witt having obtained for his eldest son a regiment of infantry, and thus made him favourable to the interests of Holland. Even in the province which was the head-quarters of the Orange party, Zealand, the pensionary of Middleburg, Adrien Veth, declared himself altogether devoted to liberty. He was an honest, incorruptible, bold, eloquent, and loquacious man, who possessed useful allies in his brother and in his brother-in-law, Rugersborg, the one burgomaster, the other town councillor; he possessed the entire confidence of the pensionary of the province, John de Brune, whom he was to succeed some years later. 'Holland is the mistress of many offices which gain for her votes,' wrote the correspondent of the English minister Thurloe from the Hague; 'she appoints to many embassies, to numerous military commands; she can, as is said, give away entire provinces, and she possesses baits for attracting to herself the foxes who scent out their advantage.'

De Witt occupied himself with far-seeing solicitude in this skilful handling of private interests with which statesmen, even the most rigid, cannot with impunity dispense. He held in his hands all the springs of government. Ruling the States of Holland by his authority as first minister, he eventually succeeded in putting in subjection to them the Assembly of the States-General, the great military commands and the court of justice, thus ensuring to the citizens of Holland, already possessed of the chief authority in the town councils,

that political supremacy for which they would be indebted to him.

The secretary of the States-General, Nicholas Ruysch, who shared with the Grand Pensionary of Holland the chief functions of government in the Federal Assembly, was one of the most devoted partisans of his policy. He had succeeded Musch, son-in-law of the former Grand Pensionary Cats, who had been devoted to the interests of the Prince of Orange, and who, accustomed to be at the service of every government that paid him, had been obliged to resign in order to escape being condemned as guilty of venality. De Witt had succeeded Ruysch as pensionary of Dordrecht before being elected Grand Pensionary of Holland. They were thus related to one another by a common origin and by the tradition of the same offices held in succession. Their family ties and similarity of opinions promoted an intimacy which lasted twenty years and was never troubled. During the entire duration of Ruysch's term of office, which he held till his death, his loyal co-operation enable De Witt to assume and to keep the direction of the States-General.

The fleet and the army had, moreover, passed under the dominion of the party of Holland. While the powers of admiral of the fleet, which had been vacant since the death of Tromp, were exercised by Admiral Wassenaar d'Obdam, who had omitted no advances to the new authorities, Major-General Brederode had under his command the land forces. John de Brederode, descended from the ancient Counts of Holland, had distinguished himself under the Stadtholder Frederick Henry by his brilliant military services, in recompense of which he had been made first lieutenant to the captain-general. The post of captain-general not having been filled up after the death of William II., the chief command devolved on him. Having contracted a second marriage with the elder sister of the Princess Dowager, Louise Christine of Solms, and thus become by alliance great-uncle of the young Prince of Orange, he had violently broken with the traditions of his family by voting for the Act of Exclusion. This defection had lost him the public esteem. On the occasion of a popular

entertainment at the Hague, he wished to offer wine to the passers-by in front of his house: some refused, others accepted without saluting him. Some months later, having accompanied the Prince of Nassau and the Princess Dowager on a journey, he heard the name of Cromwell murmured in his ear as a term of reproach bestowed on him. Anxious to gain the good graces of the republican party, in order to obtain in the event of the appointment of a captain-general the reversion of the military authority of William II., he had paid assiduous court to John de Witt and gave him many proofs of his confidence. 'If, in our province, and especially in our body of nobility,' he wrote to him, 'there is the slightest hesitation on any occasion, I beg you will declare publicly that I give my vote in accordance with your wise and just opinion.' He was thus a devoted and docile ally of the Grand Pensionary.

The successive vacancies of the two presidencies of the great courts of justice had given the party of Holland still further opportunity for favouring its followers. Although the two courts were common to Holland and Zeeland, Holland, in consequence of the number of her councillors and the turns of presidentship which had been assigned to her, had easily ensured for herself the pre-eminence. The president of the provincial court, Wyngaerden, having been pronounced unfit to continue his functions, the States of Holland nominated as his successor one of those who had gained for themselves the greatest right to their confidence, John Dedel. They obtained the sanction of the States of Zeeland, and induced them to proceed conjointly to his installation. Two years later, a successor being required for the president of the grand council, Cornelius Haga, who had just died, the States of Holland invited the States of Zeeland to a full meeting, in which they caused their candidate, Reynier Pauw Van der Horst, to be chosen. With regard to appointments that only depended upon their own Assembly, they could not fail to be even more favourable to the most decided partisans of the new government. Thus they reserved for Cornelius de Witt, brother of John de Witt, the office of Ruard of Putten, one of the best in the province, from the extent of its functions,

which included those of bailiff and of *dijkgraaf*, or superintendent of dykes, in one of the most important districts in the province.

The Orange party, who had not yet desisted from their struggle in the other provinces, appeared to have capitulated in Holland. Their chief representatives had been superseded in the States; some had been driven from them; the rest only wished to continue quietly in the enjoyment of the posts which they occupied by causing themselves to be forgotten. Cornelius Aerssens van Sommelsdyck, who had been compromised in the expedition of William II. against Amsterdam, had only obtained the benefits of the amnesty by retiring from the Assembly of the province. Bronkhorst, lord of Wimmenum, on whom the partisans of the old government thought they could count, 'was too wise to confound his interests with those of the House of Orange, and, in spite of the authority conferred on him by his numerous functions, he renounced the pretensions of leader of the party, which he had been unable to support.' Senior of the body of nobles, 'although his family was not amongst the most illustrious or the most ancient in the country, he was president of the board of councillor deputies, and joined to those important functions those of curator of the University of Leyden, of grand huntsman of Holland, and of bailiff and superintendent of dykes in the district of Rhymland. He had thus secured to himself an income exceeding 20,000 florins, and had no ambition beyond that of retaining it.

The growing strength of the new government had increased the number of its followers. In addition to the men who served its cause in the embassies, such as Kaiser, Nieupoort, Beverningh, and Van Beuningen, others showed no less loyalty and zeal as deputies or pensionaries of the towns. Amongst the nobility, Noordwyck, governor of Sluys, made public profession of his attachment to the maxims of the dominant party and pronounced boldly at the Hague the word republic. Besides the Grand Pensionary of Holland, John de Witt, and the secretary of the States-General, Ruysch, the town of Dordrecht contained quite a body of statesmen: Cornelius

van Beveren, auditor-general, and Jacob Beveren van Zwyn-drecht, who had married the sister of John de Witt and was a deputy to the States of Holland; Slingelandt, pensionary of the town, and afterwards secretary of the State Council of the Confederation, and Anthony Vivien, first cousin of John de Witt, who succeeded Slingelandt in his municipal office. Bol, one of the magistrates of Haarlem, who became councillor deputy of Holland, is mentioned in the diplomatic correspondence of the time as possessing the entire confidence of the Grand Pensionary. Meerman, son of a lawyer of Leyden and pensionary of Delft, a bold and audacious young man, who was commissioned to prepare the publication of the golden book or register of the resolutions of the Assembly of Holland, was already reckoned amongst the most energetic defenders of the authority of the States.

At Amsterdam, the family which John de Witt had entered by his marriage had supreme power in the magistracy. His wife's uncles, Cornelius Bicker van Swieten, former burgomaster, whose courage had saved Amsterdam by preventing the Stadtholder William II. from taking it by surprise; Cornelius de Graëff, lord of Zuidpolsbroeck, one of the principal members of the town council and councillor deputy of Holland, and Andrew de Graëff, successively councillor and burgomaster, placed their experience and authority at the service of the young minister of the province. They increased their influence by introducing into the town council fresh and young recruits: Van Hoorn, one of the confidants of the Grand Pensionary, who was shortly afterwards made burgomaster, and De Groot, who continued to the last one of John de Witt's most devoted partisans, and who was appointed soon after to the office of pensionary of the town. The republican party found in these men the most valuable servants, who guaranteed to them a loyalty that was beyond doubt, and the most valuable co-operation. 'We experience, thank God, more and more every day in the province of Holland greater sympathy, harmony, and confidence amongst the members of our Assembly,' wrote De Witt to one of the ambassadors of the republic.

This good understanding ensured to the States of Holland the free exercise of their authority. They took advantage of it to rid themselves of all dependence on the States-General. Two incidents, the trial of the councillors of Brazil and the nomination of Beverningh as treasurer-general, will suffice to show the resistance which they opposed to the domination of the latter.

After the loss of Brazil, which was retaken from the republic by the Portuguese during the war with England, the two councillors of the colony, Haëck and Schonenburg, and Lieutenant-General Schaep, who commanded the troops under their orders, had been impeached; the States-General had referred the case to the council of state of the confederation. John de Witt, as soon as he was informed of this resolution, fearing that the States-General might take advantage of it to extend the prerogatives of their jurisdiction, undertook to prevail on the States of Holland to claim their right of judging one of the two councillors of Brazil, Haëck, who was a native of Holland. A compromise was at length proposed and accepted. The States-General appointed judges for Haëck and Schonenburg; but the judges they selected were those belonging to the provinces of which the two councillors were natives. Haëck was arraigned before the court of Holland, Schonenburg before the court of Groningen, and the trial of Lieutenant-General Schaep was referred to a court-martial. The proceedings ended in an acquittal, and this struggle for jurisdiction, which placed an unfortunate obstacle in the way of the course of justice, struck a blow at the authority of the federal power.

The States of Holland showed themselves no less careful of their prerogatives in refusing to the States-General the right of making an inquiry into the embassy of their deputy Beverningh, who was accused of having suggested to Cromwell the Act of Exclusion. In order to oblige him to render to them an account of his negotiations, the States-General, on the proposal of the deputies of Friesland, determined, so long as he had not exculpated himself, not to allow him to occupy the post of treasurer-general of the republic, to which he had

been named eight months before. The States of Holland, who claimed to be the judges of his conduct, declared that, as the Act of Exclusion only engaged their own province, they alone were qualified to receive his solemn oath of justification. To impress upon the States-General that they must rest content with this, they decided, on the proposal of their Grand Pensionary, that, until his definitive appointment as treasurer-general, Beverningh should sit in the Federal Assembly as an ordinary deputy of the province.

The States of Holland, unable to forget the assistance which the States-General had given successively to the Stadtholder Maurice of Orange, when he had caused their Grand Pensionary, Olden Barneveldt, to be condemned, and to the Stadtholder William II., when he nearly made them the victims of his attempt at a coup d'état, thought they could not take too many precautions to oppose the supremacy of the Federal Assembly. They wished to put into practice the system of government of which John de Witt had drawn up the political programme, and according to which 'the United Provinces, while forming only a single state in their relations with foreign sovereigns, remained none the less seven independent states as regarded their internal affairs.'

Still, their security was not ensured so long as the States-General might attempt to confer on the Prince of Nassau the government of the Confederation. On that account the Grand Pensionary employed numerous confidential agents, in order that he might be enlightened by frequent reports on the prince's conduct and proceedings. He interrogated the burgomasters of Holland with whom the prince had had interviews, removed from Dordrecht the regiment which was under his command, and reinforced the garrison of the Hague with regiments whose officers gave pledges of loyalty to the States. De Witt soon had cause to perceive that his distrust was justified; the preliminaries of the trial of Messen, his chief clerk or secretary,¹ revealed to him the manœuvres which were

¹ The account of this trial has been published in a remarkable article by M. Nedermeijer de Rosenthal, in the *Recueil des pièces historiques et archéologiques du pays*, vol. x. Part III., 1855.

intended to ruin him, and in which the Prince of Nassau had taken part.

John de Messen had occupied with the two last Grand Pensionaries of Holland, Cats and Pauw, the post which he continued to fill after John de Witt had succeeded them. Offended by De Witt's somewhat haughty manners, unable to forgive him the order he had received to speak to him with uncovered head, contrary to custom, and annoyed by the precedence which the Grand Pensionary had given in his office to a new-comer, the lawyer Hallingh, he determined to be revenged. With this view he accepted the overtures which had been made to him by Theodore de Ruyven, treasurer of the Prince of Nassau, and communicated to him the most private matters of which he had daily cognisance. Ruyven was not satisfied with transmitting these to the Prince of Nassau; he conspired with Messen to falsify and pervert the correspondence of John de Witt, in order to arouse implacable resentment against him. Thus he had caused a rumour to be spread that the Grand Pensionary had suggested to Cromwell the Act of Exclusion, that he had even requested that the English fleet should be sent to the coasts of Zealand to overcome the resistance offered by that province to the States of Holland, and that he had gone so far as to advise the Protector to cause, if necessary, some of the towns on the coast to be occupied by his troops. Ruyven supported these false imputations, and persuaded the Prince of Nassau that evident proof had been found in a pretended despatch written by the Grand Pensionary to Beverningh and Nieupoort, the draft of which John de Witt kept carefully concealed in a casket. By the help of these calumnies, he cast on the Grand Pensionary the weight of an accusation which seemed unanswerable. He had even carried the forethought of hatred so far as to keep careful notes of the communications which he forwarded to the Prince of Nassau: he entered them in a journal, and intended to hand them over some day to the young Prince of Orange, in order to convict De Witt of having wished to deprive him of the power of his ancestors by taking the initiative in the Act of Exclusion. The two culprits

could not long conceal their intrigues; De Witt at length became aware of them, and appealed to the court of Holland.

Messen was immediately arrested, and, having been submitted to a preliminary interrogation, his wife was brought before the court, and her avowals, confirmed afterwards by his own, left no doubt as to the guilt of Ruyven. The latter was immediately thrown into prison, and it was necessary to use force in order to obtain possession of the papers which he attempted to conceal.

The Grand Pensionary had now proofs of the misdeeds of his secretary, as well as those of his own justification. He had discovered in Messen's desk the journal kept by Ruyven, who had thus prepared a witness against himself of his own frauds. De Witt took care to refute its assertions by bringing forward the authentic documents. He communicated them to the commissioners of the court, who examined them most minutely. Brought into the presence of his judges, Messen tried to extenuate his faults by alleging that he was ignorant of the use which Ruyven had made of his revelations, averring 'that he had in the end refused them to him.' Ruyven would not at first acknowledge his forgeries; he declared in a preliminary examination that 'out of Christian charity' he pitied Beverningh for having to exonerate himself by oath from having promoted the Act of Exclusion. But when his journal was put before him with the irrefutable annotations of the Grand Pensionary, he was obliged to confess that he had distorted every fact. The latest confidential letters which the Grand Pensionary had exchanged with the ambassadors in England, and which were brought forward in court, completed the discomfiture of Ruyven, and caused entire justice to be done to John de Witt's conduct of the negotiations. Ruyven could not continue to deny that he had known of these despatches, and his dishonesty was thus made evident.

There could be no doubt as to the verdict. Messen was pronounced 'treacherous and infamous,' and banished forever from the provinces within the jurisdiction of the courts of Holland, Zealand, and the province of Utrecht. Ruyven,

who was apparently the most guilty, was only condemned to exile for six years. The sentence pronounced against him declared his journal to be calumnious, seditious, and scandalous, and prohibited its publication or the preservation of a single copy or fragment under pain of punishment as a disturber of the public peace. The punishment might appear mild for those days, and according to the words attributed to him by a contemporary, 'John de Witt was surprised that only a fox's brush should have been used to chastise the culprits.' 'I could have wished,' he wrote to the ambassador Nieupoort, 'that Ruyven should have been forced to make a still clearer and more complete confession. However, I willingly leave the verdict to others, knowing that, when a judge has satisfied his own conscience, one ought to be content.' The indulgence of the court was easily explained. The respectful reserve which it had shown towards the Prince of Nassau, compromised as he was by his correspondence with Ruyven, by only mentioning him casually in the sentence, and speaking of him only as a person of high position outside the province of Holland, proved how anxious it was to keep on terms with him. In not punishing too severely one of his principal agents, it gave him a no less evident proof of consideration. It feared to incur his resentment, in the anticipation of a speedy turn of fortune in his favour.

The vacancy of the chief command of the army appeared indeed likely to turn to his advantage. Major-General Brederode had just died. Attached, in spite of his relationship, to the cause of the republican government, Brederode had given the first minister of the States of Holland a last mark of confidence by choosing him as one of his executors, though De Witt refused to accept the office, which seemed to him incompatible with his post of Grand Pensionary. His succession could not fail to excite the ambition of the Prince of Nassau, who, in his capacity as Grand Master of the Artillery, occupied the principal military command next to him. He had obtained the withdrawal of his cousin, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, former governor of Brazil, and lieutenant-general of the cavalry, who might have been his

rival; his candidature, which appeared to make his speedy nomination certain, reawakened the hopes of the Orange party. While the greatest honours were paid at Amsterdam to the Princess Dowager, who had come there to negotiate an alliance between her son-in-law, the Elector of Brandenburg, and the United Provinces, the dissensions which had been appeased threatened to spring up again even in the Assembly of the States of Holland. The health of John de Witt had kept him absent for a month, and his absence had encouraged the intrigues of those who were trying to supplant him, by asking for him the post of ambassador extraordinary to Sweden, where the interests of the republic might profit by his services.

Fearing that the post of major-general might be conferred by the States-General on the Prince of Nassau without the States of Holland being able to oppose it, the Grand Pensionary undertook to satisfy him, by inducing him to accept the conditions of an agreement. The advances of the Prince of Nassau made reconciliation easier. He had shown his appreciation of the assistance which De Witt had just given him by helping him to settle his differences with the nobility of the province of Groningen. 'I am happy,' he wrote to him, 'in having learnt to know you better, as I have found you quite different from what you were represented to me; for I have found nothing in you that is not honest, upright and just. I hope you have found me also different from the reports that have been made to you about me, as I am of quite another sort of temper and principle, not at all overbearing or ambitious, but loving justice and moderation.' The trial of Ruyven and Messen could only confirm him in the favourable dispositions which he displayed, by convincing him that he had entertained unjust prejudices against De Witt.

The Grand Pensionary took advantage of these sentiments to obtain frequent interviews with the Prince of Nassau, 'about which the bolder republicans began to be uneasy.' He explained to him the advantages of a mutual understanding, and negotiated with him secretly with regard to the post

of major-general. Having obtained his consent, he easily induced the States of Holland to accept a proposal which was submitted to the States-General on the report of Van Ghent, deputy of Guelders, and to which the name of Project of Harmony was given. By the terms of this agreement, the States of Holland undertook to nominate the Prince of Nassau major-general, provided this post was declared incompatible with that of stadtholder. The Prince of Nassau was, however, confirmed in his office of stadtholder of the provinces of Friesland and Groningen, and only called upon to renounce the lieutenantancy to the stadtholdership of Overijssel; but he was bound, on the other hand, to engage by oath to observe the treaty of peace concluded with Cromwell, and to undertake nothing against the Act of Exclusion. The exclusion of the son of William II. was thus ratified, and, according to the shrewd remark of a contemporary, 'what had hitherto only been painted in water-colours was now painted in oils.' Moreover, this separation between the civil and the military authority, which the Grand Pensionary made the constant aim of his policy, allowed a leader to be given to the army without exposing Holland to the domination of a master, and thus guaranteed her against the danger of a change of government. 'The Project of Harmony is a proof of your great prudence and wisdom,' wrote one of his uncles to De Witt, and De Witt, not concealing his satisfaction, expressed it thus to his father: 'I cannot wish for anything better than what I have obtained.'

The opposition of the Orange party, who could not forgive the Prince of Nassau for his compliance, put difficulties in the way of the execution of these conventions. The provinces of Zealand, Friesland, and Groningen obstinately refused to make the promises demanded of them. But Holland gained rather than lost by this ill-will. To obtain her consent to his nomination as major-general, the Prince of Nassau resigned his office as lieutenant to the stadtholdership of Overijssel, and thus alienated the partisans of the restoration, who, no longer reckoning on his services, continued to leave vacant the post they had destined for him. This disunion

disarmed the Orange party, and the States of Holland had no longer for the moment anything to fear from its enterprises.

They took advantage of this security to strengthen their government. They had already given all their attention to the good administration of their finances, and had thus ensured the resources necessary for acquiring the political preponderance which was to render them the masters of the confederation. The charges which the budget of their province had to support annually exceeded the receipts, and made Holland resemble a fine edifice with a splendid exterior but whose foundations were undermined and ruined. The Grand Pensionary set to work with the most vigilant care to restore by order and economy the good administration of the public revenues. He obtained, by degrees, the suppression of privileges exempting from taxation, the revision of arbitrarily conferred pensions, the retrenchment of superfluous allowances for the benefit of the army and the more equal distribution amongst the provinces of diplomatic expenditure, which had risen from 79,154 to 237,462 florins,¹ but was in future to be laid to the charge of the federal budget, instead of being almost exclusively borne by Holland.

Still, this reduction of expenses did not suffice to put an end to the deficit; it was necessary, in order to restore the financial balance, to have recourse to a more efficacious measure, for which Holland was indebted to the Grand Pensionary. The sums which she had been obliged to borrow in order to carry on the war with Spain, after the expiration of the ten years' truce, had imposed too heavy a burden on her finances. Her debt had risen to 153,000,000 florins, of which 140,000,000 were borrowed at interest, requiring an annual payment amounting to 6,907,700 florins. By reducing these annuities from five to four per cent., John de Witt freed Holland from engagements which were exhausting her resources.

This operation was difficult to carry through. Already, in 1640, the interest on the funded debt of Holland had been reduced from 6½ to 5 per cent., but this saving had not effected

¹ In 1663 the Grand Pensionary increased these expenses to 258,809 florins in spite of the opposition of some of the provinces.

any reduction in the expenditure, which had even increased by 500,000 florins owing to the expenses of the war. It seemed rash to renew fifteen years later an operation which had failed in its object once before, and which involved the risk of destroying the confidence of the creditors of the State. The latter would besides be very little inclined towards a measure which deprived them of part of their income; and as they were to be found principally among the magistrates of the towns of whom the States' deputies were the delegates, the plans of the Grand Pensionary might be hindered. No sooner, indeed, did he make them known than several towns, amongst which were Leyden and Alkmar, refused their consent; others, of which Rotterdam was one, demanded that the reduction should not be beyond $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. But at the end of five months all the members of the Assembly, sacrificing private to public interest, had allowed themselves to be convinced, and on the report of Van Beuningen the plan of the Grand Pensionary was definitively adopted.

Holland thus gained an annual saving in interest of 1,400,000 florins, representing a capital of 28,000,000 florins. The rights of the fundholders were no less considered than the interests of the treasury; a delay of two months was granted them to demand repayment, if they would not consent to the reduction. This scrupulous respect shown by a republic to its creditors might be advantageously compared with the summary proceedings which took place in France, and of which Boileau complains in the following terms:—

. . . . plus pâle qu'un rentier,
A l'aspect d'un arrêt qui retranche un quartier.

By reducing the payment of interest from 7,000,000 to 5,600,000 florins, the States of Holland did more than save themselves from a present difficulty; they took their measures for the future and secured a sinking fund. They appropriated to this the interest, amounting to 1,400,000 florins, which they saved by the reduction of interest, added to it 250,000 florins which they saved out of their ordinary estimates by means of the reduction of the army, and thus employed, with the interest of the capital sunk, about 2,000,000 florins for

the gradual redemption of the debt, which they hoped to pay off entirely in a space of forty-one years. In order to save the credit of their province from all risk of danger, the States of Holland induced the States-General to follow their example in reducing the federal debt, the amount of which was inconsiderable; by putting an end to all further transactions in the 5 per cents., they prevented their own 4 per cents. falling into disfavour. The increased means which they obtained by the conversion of their debt and the prudent manner in which they were employed, could only strengthen the security of their creditors, and ensure themselves against any demand of repayment. The Grand Pensionary's experiment was henceforth completely successful. He spoke of the conversion of the funds as 'the important affair on which he had bestowed all his strength, in order to gain for Holland greater respect at home and abroad.' He had thus applied with advantage the maxims of political economy which had been the object of his persevering studies, and borrowed from financial science far-sighted combinations with which the other European States had not yet become familiarised.

Secured against the aggression of the other provinces by their agreement with the Prince of Nassau, possessing pledges of internal security in the good administration of their finances, 'which gained them the popular favour and placed them in a better position than any monarch for making laws for their subjects,' the States of Holland were ceaselessly occupied in all measures favourable to the preservation of the republican form of government. With this view, they took steps to secure themselves with regard to the army and the clergy. To avert any military movement which might place their authority in danger, they reconstituted the regiment of guards which had continued quartered at the Hague, and divided it into four companies under the command of captains on whom they could depend. Strict subordination was exacted from the troops, not only by the order issued to the commanders forbidding them to take part in any demonstration, but also by the prohibition of military duels.

The States of Holland were equally anxious to impose

respect for their authority on the ministers of the Calvinist clergy, some of whom showed themselves disposed to encourage by their sermons the most criminal violence. They could not forgive the Grand Pensionary his opposition to the promotion of the Prince of Orange. One of them, Goethals, having met one day two of his colleagues, ventured to ask them if it would not be lawful to cut De Witt's throat, giving his own opinion, in which one of them agreed, in the affirmative. But Stermont, a pastor of the Hague, detested these sentiments, and declared that his conscience would not allow him to take part in their councils, adding that the man of blood would not live out half his days. To calm the irritation of the clergy against the Act of Exclusion, De Witt persistently put before them Cromwell's attachment to the Protestant cause; but they were with difficulty persuaded, and it was only by the sternest injunctions of obedience to the new government that their flights of eloquence could be controlled. Still the States of Holland thought it necessary to satisfy them by making at least some concessions to their demands of religious intolerance. Having refused the expulsion of priests of the Roman Catholic religion, they consented to the passing of a law of exception which rendered Catholics incapable of exercising municipal functions, and prohibited them from making by will any gifts in favour of the ministers or establishments belonging to their religion. It was a melancholy denial of the principles of religious liberty in a country which gloried in having conquered it, but which sometimes failed to respect it.

The theological quarrels which threatened to arise again, and which would not have failed to keep up the excitement of the preachers, was another cause of anxiety for the States of Holland, and rendered their intervention necessary. Twenty-five years previously these quarrels had cost their Grand Pensionary, Olden Barneveldt, his life, when he took part against the Stadtholder Maurice of Orange in the struggle between the Arminians and the Gomarists, which was a struggle between innovation and orthodoxy. They gave occasion for the same vehemence with regard to the philosophy of Descartes, which was defended by the disciples of the pro-

fessor Cocceius and attacked by those of the theologian Voetius. In spite of the preference of the principal deputies of Holland and the Grand Pensionary De Witt for the opinions of Cocceius, the States of Holland took the part of the Voetians who were supported by the Calvinist clergy. In the hope of pacifying these differences, they undertook to conclude a treaty of division between theology and philosophy, which assigned to them 'the bounds and limits within which they must restrict themselves, without encroaching upon one another, so as to avoid all confusion and disorder.'

The States of Holland were still more interested in taking advantage of every opportunity for discouraging the pretensions of the Orange party. They held out, therefore, against all concessions, granting to the young Prince of Orange no exemption from taxation, insisting that petitions presented in his name should be drawn up on stamped paper like those of all their subjects, and refusing to designate him in official documents by the title of Highness, which they considered would perpetuate the outward signs of the stadtholdership. Not choosing to make any engagement in his favour, they also declined the offers of the States of Zealand and of the Princess Dowager of Orange, who proposed to them that they should take part in his education or his guardianship. They contented themselves with showing the respect due to his birth and to the services of his family by allowing him to inhabit the palace of his ancestors, and by giving orders for the prosecution of the authors of all libels which insulted the House of Orange.

This determined attitude overawed the other provinces. Having resigned themselves to the cessation of all contests with the States of Holland, they consented to acknowledge Beverningh as treasurer-general, without paying any attention to the persistent opposition of the deputies of Friesland, who could not forgive him the Act of Exclusion, and they yielded to the representations of the Federal State Council pointing out the prejudice which would result to the republic from the vacancy of so important a post. Holland thus obtained reparation for the ill-will that had lasted for two

years, and might consider her adversaries as finally reduced to submission.

The sudden attempt which the latter made to resume the offensive was unsuccessful and only served to show their impotence. At the beginning of the year 1657, by a preconcerted understanding between the deputies of Friesland and those of Overijssel, one of the former, Epo Boetsma, taking advantage of the weekly turn of presidency which was the right of the province of Overijssel, renewed inopportunistically the proposal for the selection of a major-general, and demanded of the States-General that they should not allow themselves to be stopped by the opposition of Holland if it were still persisted in. The recent nomination of Beverningh gave him an opportunity for adducing the strongest arguments, as the choice of a commander for the army was more important to the republic than that of a treasurer-general, and a unanimous vote of the provinces could not be required for one of these posts when a majority of suffrages had been considered sufficient for the other. The opportunity seemed favourable for a vote to be carried by surprise; the Grand Pensionary was absent, the States of Holland were not assembled. The deputy of Overijssel, Mulart, who presided over the sitting of the States-General, caused it to be decided at once that the question should be settled in the sitting of the following day. After stormy and vehement debates, the majority of the provinces having given their decision, he announced in their name that the commission of major-general would be made out without delay, in order that so important an appointment should not be left any longer in suspense. The remonstrances of the councillor-deputies of Holland, who in the interval between the sittings represented the States of the Province, were vainly supported by the Grand Pensionary, who had returned hastily from Amsterdam; he only succeeded in obtaining with great difficulty an adjournment of a fortnight.

The States of Holland took advantage of this delay to resume their sittings, and the Grand Pensionary succeeded in preventing any dissension being displayed in their Assembly. Strong in their union and determined not to allow themselves

to be dictated to, they voted against the appointment of major-general, to which they had previously consented only on condition of a preliminary agreement on the Project of Harmony. Their resolution, which had been embodied in a report carefully prepared by John de Witt, was communicated to the States of the other provinces with a letter which left no further doubt as to their intentions. They concluded it by announcing that in the event of the selection of a major-general being carried out in spite of their opposition, the troops in the pay of Holland, which represented the greater part of the army, would no longer obey, at least in times of peace, any but a commander of their own, whom they reserved to themselves the right of nominating. They appeared disposed to confer their command on Louis of Nassau, lord of Beverwaert, in whom they counted on finding a general 'esteemed by military men and who would not hesitate to obey them.'

Still it was not without uneasiness that De Witt looked forward to these extremities, which would imperil the confederation of the United Provinces; he dreaded a violent collision between Holland and the other provinces, which did not appear disposed to yield. 'What I fear,' he wrote to one of his relations, his habitual confidant, Zuidpolsbroeck, 'is that the other provinces, with their appointed chief, may make themselves masters of the frontier towns situated outside this province and place Holland under the necessity of submitting. Perhaps I exaggerate; but it is my habit to consider important affairs under their most serious aspect, so that I may always be prepared and on my guard against any event which may happen.'

Under these circumstances, everything depended upon the more or less pacific course that would be taken by the Prince of Nassau. He could not show himself indifferent to his own interest. John de Witt had failed in obtaining from him a disavowal of his partisans, or in preventing his applying to the States of Holland for their consent to his nomination. But the latter were the less disposed to accede to his request, that Cromwell, whose implacable enemy he had always de-

clared himself, had once more taken alarm, on account of the clamorous attempt made on his behalf. Moreover, the few partisans whom the young Prince of Orange still preserved, instead of making common cause with him, continued to display feelings of jealousy and distrust towards him. He soon perceived, therefore, that any hasty step might be prejudicial to him, as the post of major-general would no longer be of any advantage to him if the contingent of the troops of Holland were placed under the command of a leader of their own. Fearing that the States of Holland might make choice of his rival Beverwaert, he preferred to await the opportunity of a foreign war, which would make it impossible for the military command to be left any longer vacant. He hoped that this patient moderation would leave open to him the command of the army, by securing to him, when the opportune moment should arrive, the gratitude of the party of Holland and of the Grand Pensionary. His cautious policy disconcerted the warlike dispositions of the other provinces and prevented them from carrying out their enterprise. The States of Holland were thus encouraged to persevere in their policy of resistance. At the suggestion of John de Witt, they published a manifesto intended to justify it, in which they renewed their vindication of the sovereignty of each province, even at the risk of exaggeration, and declared 'that their intention of opposing the nomination of a major-general was henceforth irrevocable.'

Provoked by the rash aggressions of the other provinces, they had renounced the wise projects for an agreement which might easily have been concluded, but their opposition was detrimental to the interests of the republic. The army, being no longer commanded, was condemned to inevitable deterioration. All military rule having ceased and been replaced by that of the civil authorities, the commands which still remained were independent of one another. Prince William Frederick of Nassau, in his capacity of Grand Master of the Artillery, Prince John Maurice of Nassau and the Rhingrave Salms, one lieutenant-general and the other commissary-general of the cavalry, had no authority over the other bodies of troops.

The infantry, which consisted of 26,000 men, had no longer any leader. Frederick Henry, the last but one of the stadtholders and captains-general, had, in his time, abolished by degrees the principal commands, in order not to have, even below him, any one to share in his authority, and he had restricted himself to a major-general. The post of major-general having become vacant, there remained only colonels to exercise the command. Beverwaert, whom the States of Holland would have been disposed to make captain-general of the troops of their province, had only, save in time of war, an honorary post in his capacity of *sergent de bataille* or chief of the staff. The principal officers whom the States-General had in their employ were Francis de l'Aubespine, Marquis de Hauterive, governor of Breda, who, 'deaf and gouty, had retired to France, where he employed himself in embellishing his house of Montrouge, although he preferred, as he said, the diversions of Breda to the splendour and magnificence of Paris;' Wenberge, 'old and infirm,' who on the death of Major-General Brederode had obtained the governorship of Bois-le-Duc; Kirkpatrick; Pugler, governor of Schenk; Starrenburg, colonel of the guards, and Percival, one of his captains, described in a contemporary report as an engineer particularly skilled in the construction of fortifications. Regiments had also been given to Dolman and Bampfield,¹ both of English origin, who had gained by their devotion the confidence of the republican party, and who kept up a military and political correspondence with John de Witt. The States were satisfied with appointing a colonel when they wanted to unite a body of troops under one command, but they then only entrusted to him a temporary authority, which could not therefore be efficient. De Witt was too far-seeing to be indifferent to this military weakness, which was disorganising the army. At his proposal, the States of Holland hastened to satisfy the objections of the Council of State, which drew attention to the appointment of youthful and inexperienced

¹ Bampfield had accompanied the Duke of York to Holland, at the commencement of the revolution in England, after having assisted him in escaping from St. James's Palace, where he was kept prisoner.

officers, the abuse of leave granted by the States of the Provinces without the knowledge of the Council of State, and the weakening of the numerical force of the regiments. The following year they employed themselves with equal solicitude in new regulations for the constitution of the army, and demanded that an end should be put to the sale of military commands by a general prohibition which they were unable to procure; but these were only palliatives, very insufficient to cure an evil which was daily increasing.

Still, the danger was too remote to arouse uneasiness. The States of Holland had no longer anything to fear for their internal security, and could enjoy at their leisure the discouragement to which their political adversaries were reduced. The vacancy in the post of major-general succeeding at an interval of three years the Act of Exclusion, deprived the Orange party of all hopes of a restoration. The dissensions of the other provinces, which were a prey to constantly renewed disturbances, made Holland the arbiter of the confederation and enabled her to exercise the powers of the ancient stadtholders. Thus she was commissioned to intervene as mediator between the two factions who were contending for the government of Overijssel. In response to their appeal, De Witt and his uncle Cornelius de Graeff, lord of Zuidpolsbroeck, burgo-master of Amsterdam, were appointed negotiators, and procured the acceptance of a plan of pacification in accordance with which any proposal for the nomination of a stadtholder in Overijssel should be postponed till the majority of the young Prince of Orange. 'We have at last pronounced our decision,' wrote De Witt to Nieupoort, 'in the presence of those interested, in the Assembly of their Noble Mightinesses; it will be published in the name of their Noble Mightinesses, and under the name of Holland, to serve as instructions to the States of the province of Overijssel.'

Having thus acquired the peaceable enjoyment of a supremacy which was henceforth uncontested, the States of Holland turned their attention to the marks of consideration due to them, and the outward signs which might make their sovereignty in some sort visible. 'In order,' they declared,

'not to be without the titles proper to the dignity, the rank, the honour, the grandeur, and the sovereignty of the province,' they required all the foreign ministers accredited to the republic to cause their governments to adopt invariably the formula of address thus laid down: 'To the Noble, Great, and Mighty Lords, the States of Holland and West Friesland.' To enhance by outward show the splendour of their power, they made use of another hall for their sittings in the ancient palace of the Counts of Holland, which they caused to be magnificently decorated. The magistrates of Amsterdam, on their side, had taken possession of a new town hall, an imposing edifice which had taken seven years to build, had just been decorated by the greatest painters of the century, and the inauguration of which, celebrated with great solemnity, served as the subject for a commemorative medal, with this proud inscription: '*Salutem et civis servare potens.*'

John de Witt had opened to the States of Holland this road to prosperity, along which he guided them with equal firmness and forethought. Although only charged with the execution of their orders, he had contrived to gain such authority, that those whom he called 'his masters' were freely and submissively subject to his direction. It was without flattery that the ambassador Nieupoort wrote to him: 'You who are intimately acquainted with what takes place in this state can best judge what ought or ought not to be done, to which I and those with me have only to conform.' 'John de Witt,' wrote the ambassador Chanut, 'is the most important person in the whole state, through the power of Holland over the other provinces, and that which he possesses over the ten or twelve principal leaders of the governing party.'

He carefully avoided, however, all appearance of domination. When his powers as Grand Pensionary had legally expired, he surrendered them to the States of Holland, and wrote to them with the humblest deference the following letter: 'On this day five years ago you confided to me my office; I now place it in your hands, thanking you for the long patience with which you have borne with my imperfect

services. I can assure you that if I have committed faults that are inseparable from human weakness, I have never done so from premeditation, or wilfully. I hope that your kindness and favour will grant me the pardon which I ask from the Assembly in general, and from every member in particular. If I may be released from my functions I shall wish for no greater reward, as the faithful servant of my country.'

The States of Holland were too much interested in the continuance of their trust in him to forego his services, and by a unanimous vote they re-invested him in his office. Moreover, to guarantee him in anticipation the recompense which they reserved for him, they engaged to give him a seat in one of the courts of justice, whenever he should cease from his functions as Grand Pensionary. This re-election, by prolonging his powers, enabled him to enjoy the success of his own work. Since the day on which he had entered upon his office as first minister, each step that he had made along a path interrupted by obstacles had been a step in advance. Compelled, at the very outset of his ministry, to defend his party against the attempts at a restoration which, by giving the power to a child, might give cause to fear the dangers inseparable from a minority, he had found himself obliged besides to preserve the United Provinces from the dangers of a war with England, which was ruining them and which might destroy them irretrievably. He had passed happily through these trials. His home policy had now guaranteed the independence of Holland against all attacks and ensured her the federal supremacy. His foreign policy had not been less skilful or less fortunate; it had gained for the republic, once isolated and humbled, alliances, victories, and treaties.

Internal divisions following on the disasters of the war with England had weakened and discredited the States-General abroad. Their minister at the Court of France, Boreel, never ceased lamenting this in his correspondence with De Witt. 'Everyone imagines,' he wrote, 'that the state is in a position in which she may be insulted with impunity.' The Grand Pensionary was eager to reassure him, and confided to him, in

the following terms, his patriotic hopes:—'You and all the ministers at foreign courts can indeed easily judge—even better, perhaps, than we who are here—how important it is for the state to put an end to all jealousy and distrust between the members of the union. For some time past, with all my feeble power, I have worked for this with all my heart, and I expect a prompt and real success. If it should be so, the allies of this state may expect more efficient proofs of our friendship, and those who are not well affected to her will have greater cause to fear her.' Neither did he neglect any opportunity for restoring to the republic the credit which she appeared to have lost. He was more interested than anyone else in procuring satisfaction for the national pride, in order to obliterate the humiliations of the treaty which he had concluded with Cromwell.

The commerce of the United Provinces, which had been injured by the last war, was actively watched over and defended on all seas. Vice-Admiral Ruyter, having been despatched to the Mediterranean to defend their merchant shipping against the African pirates, sailed to Algiers, which he was unable to attack, but where he spread terror, overran the coasts of Morocco, seized several pirate vessels, and advanced on a second expedition as far as the coast of Tunis. He succeeded in this manner in repressing a system of piracy which had long remained unpunished, and re-established friendly relations between the native sovereigns and the republic. The kings of Morocco and Fez made choice of three envoys, who repaired to the Hague to renew the treaty formerly concluded between their masters and the United Provinces. 'M. de Witt,' who was always curious to know thoroughly all the states of the world,' writes the French ambassador, 'took pains to do them all sorts of kind offices, and caused them to be received at the expense of their High Mightinesses.'

In the colonies, also, the republic repaired with happy promptitude the blow that had been inflicted on her by the loss of Brazil. It was in the far limits of Asia that she sought for compensation, and the East India Company owed to her negotiations as well as to her conquests a prosperity hitherto

unknown. She took advantage of the revolution which had just abandoned China to the Tartar invasion to obtain free entry into that great empire, and her ambassador, who was sent back to Pekin with costly presents, was received by the emperor with expressions of satisfaction. Relations with Japan were not less favourable to the Company. In spite of the expulsion of the Portuguese, and the massacre of Christians which had stained the country with blood forty years before, it had preserved its settlements and retained a right of trading in the island of Decima, opposite Nagasaki. The Company had, it is true, only obtained the recognition of these privileges at the price of humiliating conditions and by means of pretended religious apostasy forced upon its agents. But anxious only for its pecuniary interests, it cared for nothing but trade, and secured on all merchandise of which it had the monopoly profits valued at 150 per cent.

In Europe, the United Provinces could not resign themselves to a timid and retiring attitude, and they were impatient to recover the credit they had lost. A fresh attempt against religious liberty, the rumour of which spread far, enabled them to appear on the scene again, and gave them an opportunity for assuming with ostentation the patronage of the Protestant cause. The Waldenses, cruelly persecuted by the Court of Savoy for their religious belief, were seeking protectors, and the States-General responded to their appeal with eager sympathy. They supported energetically the remonstrances in which Cromwell took the initiative, added a subscription of 200,000 florins to what had been collected in England, and despatched one of their deputies, Van Ommeren, on an embassy with orders to go first to Switzerland, in order to consult with the delegates of the cantons belonging to the reformed religion. The Court of France took alarm at this intervention of the Protestant powers, and to forestall it obtained by the treaty of Pignerol a much-needed pacification, which was not, however, intended to last long. None the less to the States-General belonged the merit of having caused the persecution to cease.

The renewal of friendly relations with the great powers

was indispensable to the United Provinces to enable them to recover their freedom of action abroad and to participate in the affairs of Europe. Spain had recognised their independence, and was now too much weakened to cause them any alarm. Their treaty with Cromwell, by which they had submitted to the political exactions of the Protector, made England once more their ally. It was only their alliance with France that was in danger, and before the Grand Pensionary's skilful diplomacy had been able to secure it, they were exposed to the danger of a rupture.

France, who feared that she might be isolated in the war which she was carrying on against the Spanish monarchy, had never ceased reproaching the States-General for their defection in concluding the peace of Münster with Spain. She found fresh cause for displeasure in their treaty with Cromwell, which she would have liked to delay, in order that she might be included in it. She had, therefore, stirred up maritime quarrels with them, by claiming a right of capture over all ships belonging to the republic which carried Spanish merchandise, in accordance with the old proverb 'that the enemy's coat forfeits that of the friend.' In vain the States-General, by demanding the renewal of their maritime treaty with France, sought to obtain the recognition of that great principle of maritime law that the flag protects the cargo, which was to be one of the tardy conquests of modern civilisation; the conferences held by the Grand Pensionary with the ambassador Chanut had been of no avail. Far from relaxing her exactions, France continued them more imperiously, when Mazarin, bridging over, after a fashion, the abyss which seemed to yawn between the oldest monarchy of Europe and a regicidal republic, had obtained, by means of concessions, an alliance between Cromwell and the French Government against Spain.

In order to complete this coalition, Mazarin attempted to force the United Provinces to join it, by imposing on them a defensive and offensive alliance. Instead of giving them credit for the good-will which they displayed, he could not endure the resistance they offered to his exactions, and determined to overcome them by the most unjust severity. Not

content with withdrawing from the subjects of the United Provinces the privileges which had hitherto guaranteed them exemption from certain onerous taxes, the French Government imposed upon them a new freight duty of fifty sols, or one crown, per ton, on all foreign ships which should load or unload merchandise in the kingdom. Moreover, it declared lawful capture all vessels carrying a Spanish cargo. Under this pretext the French privateers captured, on all seas, more than 328 ships belonging to the mercantile navy of the United Provinces, representing a value of twenty or thirty millions. 'No justice can be obtained here,' writes Boreel, the ambassador of the States-General, from Paris, 'and if we ever do obtain it the sentences are not carried out. Where the United Provinces are concerned, the most obvious crimes are winked at and the plainest reasons are not listened to. Why should this be, except to force us to do what is wished here—in order to engage us in a war with Spain? The Dutch consul at Mirseilles has actually been attacked by armed men and left for dead on the spot, because he had delivered to the king's commissioners several sentences favourable to the subjects of the republic.'

The States-General, unable to endure such arbitrary measures, resolved to repel force by force. Ruyter, in the execution of their orders, surprised and seized two ships, which had just before plundered some Dutch vessels, and sent them with their crews under an escort to Amsterdam. Without waiting or admitting any explanation, the French government retaliated by confiscating all ships and merchandise belonging to the subjects of the republic in the French ports.

The United Provinces would not allow themselves to be intimidated. A policy of reprisals was eagerly advised by the States of Holland. 'I think,' wrote De Witt to Nieupoort, 'that it would be well to adopt the resolution of giving directions to the vice-admiral to attack French vessels, both merchantmen and line-of-battle ships, to take possession of them, and to continue to act thus resolutely till the embargo has been taken off by order of the King of France.' The States-General, more cautious, but equally determined to

obtain justice, contented themselves with ordering that forty-eight vessels should be fitted out. At the same time their ambassador, Boreel, forestalling their instructions, waited on the young king, to whom he represented, with lofty pride, the iniquity of the orders which had been issued. 'No ambassador ever spoke so freely at this court,' said Mazarin to him, 'and you may have to repent of it.' Boreel was obliged to be satisfied, as sole answer, with the declaration that the remonstrances of the States should be transmitted to the French ambassador, who had just started for the Hague.

The negotiator selected by Mazarin was Auguste de Thou, a member of one of the great parliamentary families of the kingdom, whose father had distinguished himself as a statesman and historian, and whose brother, François de Thou, had been one of the victims of the implacable policy of Richelieu. Assisted by Gentillot, a lieutenant-colonel in the service of the United Provinces, whom Mazarin employed as one of his agents, he undertook to gain the confidence of the States by appearing disposed to conciliate, although his instructions forbade him 'to make the first advances.' 'These people,' he wrote, 'are not to be either scolded or hurried, but must be treated gently and leisurely.' Having been received in solemn audience on April 28, 1657, De Thou warmly urged the States-General to disavow and make reparation for the conduct of Ruyter. But they persisted in their refusal to give up the two captured French vessels, so long as their own ships had not been given up to them. The French Government having refused to grant them this preliminary satisfaction, the severe measures proposed by the States of Holland appeared to be justified; they prohibited the entry of French merchandise into the United Provinces, issued orders for blockading all the ports of the kingdom, and concluded by declaring that all French vessels met with on the seas by their fleets should be lawful capture.

France had not at her disposal the necessary naval forces to allow her to brave with impunity such a danger as this, and, in order to avert it, De Thou showed himself disposed to give the States-General pledges of satisfaction, which he

undertook to have ratified. The terms of agreement were debated and agreed to, thanks to the earnest intervention of the Grand Pensionary, of Beverningh, and of their mutual friend De Groot, who thus brought about the happy termination of a painfully prolonged negotiation. The States-General insisted on a promise of the removal of the embargo placed on their ships and merchandise, the execution of the judicial decrees pronounced in favour of their subjects, the speedy conclusion of a maritime treaty, and, meanwhile, the provisional enjoyment of all privileges accorded to the inhabitants of the most favoured states. In consideration of these engagements signed by De Thou, the States-General consented without further delay to the satisfaction demanded of them. It was the triumph of a policy equally removed from weakness and rashness, decided in its pretensions, which it never exceeded, warlike from necessity, but peaceable from inclination. 'We only desire to guarantee due respect for the state, and the tranquillity of its subjects trafficking on the seas,' wrote De Witt to Nieupoort, 'and it appears to us that we have now attained our ends.'

The ill-will of Mazarin delayed, it is true, the ratification of this agreement, in spite of the remonstrances of De Thou, who never ceased to represent that these subterfuges were weakening and destroying the credit of France. Not choosing to be the dupes of their own confidence, the States-General fixed a period of ten days, after which the resolution which they had taken to exercise reprisals would be irrevocably carried out. Mazarin, obliged to take notice of the complaints of the shopkeepers of Paris, who carried on with the republic a trade valued at 20,000,000 florins, was forced to yield. A letter from the king, 'calculated to satisfy the most difficult,' was solemnly delivered to the States-General by De Thou, and gave them entire satisfaction.

An unforeseen incident, however, nearly furnished France with a grievance which might have prevented the conclusion of the negotiations. It was one of those quarrels about precedence, in regard to which the representatives of the King of France were ordered 'to go to any extremity sooner

than yield.' The ambassador, De Thou, returning from visiting the Princess Dowager in her new country house, on August 11, 1657, had met the Spanish ambassador, Gamarra, at six o'clock in the evening, on the public promenade of the Hague, the Voorhout. Their coaches, that of the French ambassador drawn by six horses, and that of Gamarra by two, having met in the carriage road, had disputed the place of honour, without either choosing to turn one step out of his way. Their servants were on the point of coming to blows, and the people, attracted by the noise of the quarrel, and irritated by the outrages committed in France against the subjects of the republic, were preparing to take part for the Spanish ambassador. De Witt and some of the members of the States, informed of the tumult, hastened to interpose, summoned the guards on duty to disperse the crowd, and undertook to settle the dispute amicably. After parleys prolonged for three hours, Beverningh proposed an expedient which was agreed to; the barrier which enclosed the carriage road, and along which the coaches were stationed, was taken down; the Spanish ambassador passed on the right of the French ambassador, thus appearing to obtain the advantage; while De Thou, satisfied with having obliged Gamarra to make way for him, attributed to himself the honours of precedence.

The pacification of the quarrel entered upon with France left the United Provinces still exposed to the exactions of the French Government so long as the latter stood in need of their assistance against Spain. The continuation of the war between the two rival monarchies gave them reason to fear that the Low Countries might be conquered by France, and that this conquest might give them a formidable neighbour. The peace of the Pyrenees, concluded soon after, in 1659, reassured the States-General. It enabled them to enjoy the benefits of a neutrality which they had not chosen to depart from, and which was now no longer threatened. Their alliance with France, which had been till now in danger, was thus secured.

They had been obliged meanwhile to observe a policy of great circumspection in order to remain the allies of England.

Their ambassador, Nieupoort, had contrived to win the confidence of the Protector by the cheerfulness of his disposition and the charms of his conversation. Cromwell sent for him without ceremony, liked to spend in his company the hours which he devoted to relaxation from business, invited him to hunt with him, and even to play at bowls with him in the park of Hampton Court. 'As I was not acquainted with that game,' wrote Nieupoort to De Witt, 'he made me bet with him. After continuing this exercise for two hours, he invited me to sit down with him, while the other gentlemen remained standing, and had me reconducted to my carriage by the secretary of state, Thurloe.' Nieupoort did not fail to respond to these advances by courtier-like attentions. Cromwell having given him to understand one day that he wished to purchase his handsome barb, Nieupoort left it intentionally in the stables at Hampton Court, and refused to take it back.

This interchange of courtesies was all the more necessary as great difficulties might be anticipated at the Hague in carrying on diplomatic relations with the English envoy, George Downing, in whom the States-General could not put any confidence. Having started in life as tutor to some young English gentlemen, Downing, appointed chaplain of a regiment in the army of the republic, had brought himself under the notice of Cromwell. Pleased with his readiness and aptness for intrigue, the Protector had commissioned him to superintend the work of his spies and secret correspondents. Allied by marriage to the House of Howard, one of the most illustrious in England, Downing soon obtained for himself an entry into diplomacy, and was sent as minister to the States-General. Immediately on his arrival at his post, he commenced a policy of chicanery and disputes from which he never afterwards departed. 'Trusting only,' according to the testimony of a contemporary who had known him well, 'to the knavish tricks on which he even prided himself, and from which he did not derive much advantage, he had not sufficient honesty or prudence to believe that there is no minister who deceives more surely and more agreeably than he who never deceives at all.

The States were obliged, therefore, to be on their guard in order to avoid any cause for a misunderstanding between the two governments, and to furnish no pretext for recrimination. Thus Holland, having purchased peace with England at the price of the Act of Exclusion of the young Prince of Orange, in his capacity as nephew of the last King of England, showed herself eager not to tolerate any conspiracy on the part of the sons of Charles I., and, to reassure the Protector, excluded them from her territories. In return for this compliance, Cromwell, though he would not accede to the conclusion of the treaty of commerce which the States-General never ceased to demand, showed a conciliatory spirit towards them by renouncing the right of search which he claimed to exercise over their vessels, to prevent them from carrying on any trade in Spanish merchandise. The States-General feared none the less that the violent measures of which the Court of France had set the example might deter the Protector from the policy of moderation which he had adopted; but they were reassured by their ambassador. 'As regards the apprehensions which I expressed to the secretary of state, Thurloe, with respect to the conduct of his government,' wrote Nieupoort to De Witt, 'he assured me that the intentions which appeared to be suspected at the Hague were in nobody's mind here, and never would be; adding that we must have confidence in one another.' Cromwell, whose mind was filled with the idea of having himself proclaimed king, and of founding a dynasty, was not disposed to stir up conflicts abroad. The war with Spain, which he renewed with fresh activity when forced to abandon his ambitious projects, and which put him in possession of Dunkirk, might, it was true, have exposed the United Provinces to fresh disputes on the subject of their neutrality. But they were spared these by his death, which followed closely upon his new conquest. The events to which it gave rise, and which soon deprived his son of power, to place it in the hands of other chiefs of the republican party who were equally unable to retain it, could not fail to be favourable to the United Provinces, by rendering it impossible for England to make any pretensions to supremacy abroad. 'We have,' wrote De Witt,

'nothing to fear from the present Parliament, which is more likely to stand in need of us in order to avoid shipwreck.' The slow dissolution of an expiring republic gave the States-General the most perfect security, and even appeared to put their old rival at their mercy.

Freed henceforth from all anxiety with regard to France and England, they took advantage of the opportunity to carry on the war with Portugal, and to secure their interests in the North by an armed intervention. Unable to obtain from Portugal the restitution of their important colony of Brazil, which had been taken from them while they were occupied in defending themselves against England, and further provoked by the seizure of their trading vessels, they determined to obtain justice by force. A fleet commanded by Ruyter proceeded to blockade Lisbon, and obliged the Portuguese Government to make proposals of peace, which were not accepted. The States-General purposely delayed the conclusion of negotiations in order to continue the war in the Indies; the Portuguese, driven out successively from the island of Ceylon and the island of Celebes or Macassar, lost their last colonies. These conquests were of advantage to the East India Company, and made up to the United Provinces for the loss of Brazil.

Events which had happened in the North imposed still more forcibly upon the States-General the necessity for intervention in order to preserve intact their maritime power. They thus secured to themselves a proudly acquired supremacy over Brandenburg, Denmark, and Sweden.

Sweden threatened them with a dangerous rivalry by seeking to resume the position which the Thirty Years' War had conferred upon her. The sudden abdication of Queen Christina had caused her rights to pass into the hands of her cousin Charles Gustavus, an ambitious and enterprising prince, who, finding on his accession to the throne that the royal treasury was exhausted, was impatient to acquire fresh resources by means of conquest. Having at his disposal a well-seasoned army, commanded by one of the great soldiers of the day, Marshal Wrangel, he considered himself bound to

continue the work of his uncle, Gustavus Adolphus, and wished to secure for himself the dominion over the Baltic Sea, of which he proposed to make a sort of Swedish lake.

Such an enterprise, if it had been successful, would have instantly destroyed the sources of the maritime prosperity of the United Provinces. It was the Baltic Sea that furnished them with their provisions of wheat, and with the necessary materials both for the construction and the maintenance of their ships; their mercantile navy employed more than five hundred vessels in this traffic. When the King of Sweden, therefore, having made a sudden invasion into the states of Casimir Vasa, king of Poland, took possession of his kingdom 'without spending more time about it than would have been required to travel through it in regular stages,' this invasion spread alarm in the United Provinces. It justified the fears of the Grand Pensionary, who wrote to one of the ambassadors of the republic: 'To see the King of Sweden master of the horizon would be one of the greatest of dangers for this state.' The treaty concluded between the United Provinces and Sweden some years before prevented them from interposing to hinder such a formidable extension of power. They therefore accepted with eagerness the unexpected offers of alliance made them by the Elector of Brandenburg, who feared that the King of Sweden's conquests might soon put himself at his mercy.

Frederick William, who, by his persistence in a policy which always remained superior to bad fortune, became in some sort the second founder of his dynasty, and merited the appellation of the Great Elector, had succeeded fifteen years before to an impoverished heritage. Deprived by Sweden of Pomerania, he was not even the independent possessor of the Duchy of Prussia, which was only a fief of Poland. Brought up in Holland, he had married the eldest daughter of the Princess Dowager, Louisa Henrietta, sister of the last Stadtholder, William II., whose name is still held in honour on account of her piety, and in whom he found, as he said himself, the most unfailing of his advisers. This relationship had made him rather hostile than favourable to the United

Provinces, since the change of government which had deprived his nephew, the Prince of Orange, of all power. This ill-will towards them was encouraged, moreover, by his envoy to the Hague, Weyman, 'an obstinate and violent man, who had begun life as a village lawyer, and had thus acquired a taste for chicanery.' The fear of Swedish domination, however, overpowered the prejudices he entertained against the party which governed the republic. By the treaty of the Hague, concluded with the United Provinces, he undertook to assist the kingdom of Poland, in consideration of the promises made to him and of the subsidies, amounting to 40,000 crowns, which he received on account. This alliance ended only in a speedy defection. Alarmed by the rapid conquest of Poland, and disconcerted by the entry of a Swedish army into his dominions, he hastened to offer submission to the King of Sweden, at the risk of being accused by the States-General 'of an act of treason which the Grand Pensionary De Witt attributed to his *vulpine* conduct,' thus reproaching him with wishing to act the fox's part. By the treaty of Königsberg he made common cause with Charles Gustavus, and five months later, by the treaty of Marienburg, he united his troops to the Swedish army, in order to complete the overthrow of the King of Poland.

The last bulwark of resistance was the town of Dantzic, the granary of plenty of the United Provinces, to which it furnished 70,000 measures of wheat. The States-General could not allow it to fall without imperilling the interests of the republic, and, while resorting to diplomatic negotiations, they soon perceived that, if they wished to save it, they must rely on themselves alone. Although the Grand Pensionary was averse from war out of respect for treaties, he nevertheless supported an energetic policy. A military demonstration proposed by the States of Holland was agreed to by the States-General; they despatched, under command of Lieutenant-Admiral Obdam, a fleet of forty-eight ships, which landed at Dantzic 1,300 foot soldiers, the command of whom was entrusted to Percival, one of the captains of the regiment of guards. Intimidated by the assistance thus ren-

dered to the besieged town, Charles Gustavus, who feared a rising in Poland, appeared disposed to negotiate articles of a treaty which were settled without difficulty in the Conference of Elbing. The States-General renewed, under conditions advantageous to their commerce, their former alliance with Sweden, and the town of Dantzic retained her liberty of remaining loyal to the King of Poland, while undertaking not to furnish him with any assistance. The free navigation of the Baltic Sea was thus ensured to the United Provinces.

The rashness of the King of Denmark exposed them to still more serious dangers. Frederick III. only awaited a favourable opportunity to recover from the Swedes the latest conquests they had made in his kingdom. The renewal of hostilities by the King of Poland against Charles Gustavus gave him the signal for which he was impatiently waiting. Not only did Casimir Vasa recover his kingdom from the King of Sweden as rapidly as the latter had conquered it, but he also deprived him of the alliance of the Elector of Brandenburg, whom he secured on his side by acknowledging him as sovereign of the Duchy of Prussia. This sudden change in the fortunes of the King of Sweden emboldened the King of Denmark, who, without considering the inferiority of his forces, declared war against his ambitious neighbour. But his invasion of the Duchy of Bremen was followed by a prompt retreat, and he soon found himself threatened in his own dominions, without the power of defending himself. In vain had the States-General addressed to him the most earnest remonstrances; to dissuade him from such imprudent conduct, of which the Grand Pensionary pointed out to him all the dangers. In vain they then advised him to accept offers of peace that would secure to him the integrity of his kingdom. Frederick III. was so imprudent as to try to gain time, hoping to drag the States-General into a precipitate rupture, from which they were saved by the prudence of the Grand Pensionary. His hesitation only profited the King of Sweden, who, breaking off negotiations, completed in a campaign of a few days the subjection of Denmark, and approached Copenhagen at the head of an army of 15,000 men. Yielding now to the

councils of despair, Frederick III. submitted to all the conditions that were imposed upon him by the victor, and ceded to him the greater part of his dominions, by signing with him the treaty of Roskild. To preserve the rights of toll in the Sound he was obliged to promise to prohibit all foreign fleets from entering the Baltic Sea. 'I have seen in the port of Amsterdam the wooden keys that will open it,' said the ambassador of the States, Van Beuningen, haughtily, to the King of Sweden, alluding to the ships of the republic, which did not allow the passage to be closed to them for long.

Although the United Provinces did not lose less than Denmark by this convention, the States-General would not perhaps have ventured to give the signal for a fresh war from which De Witt was trying to dissuade them had not the King of Sweden, making himself the aggressor, offered them the opportunity for which they were waiting to recover their liberty of action. Impatient to attempt a sudden stroke that might put into his power the last remnants of the Danish monarchy, Charles Gustavus complained that the treaty of Roskild had not been executed, and declared it broken off. All resistance gave way once more before his impetuous onset. Having obtained possession of all the strongholds of the kingdom, he proceeded to lay siege to Copenhagen, intending to raze it to the ground, Frederick III. having shut himself up there with his wife, the courageous Queen Sophia Amelia, to encourage the inhabitants to resistance. All hope for Denmark was at an end if she were not promptly rescued. The ambassador of the republic, Van Beuningen, therefore, after valiantly exposing himself in the besieged town, embarked in haste, to implore speedy assistance.

Immediately on his arrival, the States of Holland responded to the pressing appeal of the Grand Pensionary, whose pacific scruples were overcome by the necessity for war. They repaired in a body to the Assembly of the States-General, to whom they represented the imminence of the danger and demanded that the violation of the treaty should not be left unpunished. It was immediately determined to fit out a powerful fleet. To cover the expense the States of

Holland had recourse to a loan and increased their debt by 2,600,000 florins. Six weeks later Admiral Obdam de Wassenaar set sail for Copenhagen, having under his orders thirty-five ships carrying thirty-eight regiments. He was furnished with written instructions enjoining him not only to assist the King of Denmark but also to destroy the Swedish fleet.

A naval engagement soon followed. Forty-five Swedish vessels were in line; they had been placed under the command of Wrangel, major-general and admiral-in-chief, who appeared destined to sustain his military renown on sea as well as on land. The King of Sweden, hoping to escape from the necessity of fighting by not allowing his fleet to take the offensive, had not despatched it against that of the States, with whom it might have disputed the passage of the Sound; but it was overtaken at the entrance of the Baltic Sea and could not avoid the attack. The Swedish admiral's ship was assailed in turn by the Dutch Vice-Admiral de With, who commanded the van, and by Admiral Obdam, who succeeded in disabling it, but who, kept at a distance by a fire-ship, could not obtain possession of it. The struggle was a desperate one between Vice-Admirals de With and Bielkentiern. After valiantly defending his ship, which had run aground, the Dutch vice-admiral, mortally wounded by a cannon-shot, refused to surrender and went down with his ship. The second vice-admiral, Floriszoon, shared his fate, and met with an equally glorious death. Obdam, unable any longer to hope for assistance from his lieutenants and surrounded by seven of the enemy's ships, sustained their fire for four hours, succeeded in getting away and rallied the fleet around him for a fresh battle. Admiral Wrangel, who had lost eight ships, could not bar his passage and reduced to seek refuge in the harbour of Landskroon left him in possession of the sea. Copenhagen was saved. Two thousand men were disembarked there under the command of Colonel Pugler. The King of Sweden was obliged to give up the idea of storming the town, but could not make up his mind to retreat, and contented himself with a siege in form, which he

tried unsuccessfully to terminate during the course of the winter by a surprise, which was easily repulsed.

Diplomacy nearly deprived the States-General of the advantages of their victory. England and France, who showed jealousy of them, were secretly disposed to intervene on behalf of the King of Sweden, and were negotiating a convention which should put an end to the war in the North. The Grand Pensionary skilfully took the initiative in proposing to them a mediation and succeeded in getting it accepted, on condition that the States-General should unite with the two mediating powers against whichever of the two kings refused to make peace. Negotiations were prolonged for more than two months and ended in the convention of the Hague. The States-General insisted on the modification of the clauses prejudicial to them in the last treaty concluded between the King of Sweden and the King of Denmark; they succeeded in obtaining the opening of the passage of the Sound to foreign ships of war, thus putting an end to a prohibition which constituted a threat and a danger to the United Provinces.

In spite of the intervention of the mediators, Frederick III. and Charles Gustavus showed themselves little disposed to accept proposals of peace. The King of Denmark refused to leave to the King of Sweden his conquests and was indignant at the States wishing to force him to sign a treaty which he considered ignominious. 'Make peace, sire, if you do not wish to be made to do it,' said the envoy of the United Provinces, Vogelsangh, one day in a threatening tone. 'Who will make me?' answered the king; 'neither the States-General nor the devil himself can force me. If I must perish, I will perish as a man of honour and courage; but in falling I shall drag your masters with me over the precipice.' This obstinacy was the source of unceasing perplexity to De Witt, and caused him to fear lest the refusal of mediation might oblige the States-General to intervene against their ally. Taking advantage of the weakness of the Parliament, which felt itself threatened with a speedy restoration and was allowing the foreign policy of England to drift, he succeeded in getting the Convention of the Hague completed, by a clause

favourable to the King of Denmark, which restored to him, besides the bailiwick of Drontheim, a part of Norway. Frederick III., satisfied with this concession, promised to accept the treaty of peace which was offered to him. But his consent was followed by the refusal of the King of Sweden, who declined to lay down his arms, in the hope that the King of Denmark might incur the responsibility of the rupture of negotiations. Disappointed in this expectation, Charles Gustavus took advantage of the alteration which had been made in the Convention of the Hague to declare that he considered it as a violation of the engagements made with him, which might justify him in breaking off negotiations. He gave vent loudly to his anger before the plenipotentiaries of England and of the States-General, whom he received in his tent with every show of military power. Having refused to take cognisance of the project of mediation accepted by the King of Denmark, he addressed them sharply, and, laying his hand on his sword, concluded the interview with these haughty words: 'You, gentlemen, make treaties on your fleets; I make resolutions with my sword. Withdraw your ships out of reach of my forts if you do not wish me to drive them away with cannon-shot.'

The mediating powers could no longer remain neutral, the final period of delay fixed for mediation having expired. The retreat of the English squadron, which had been taken back to England by Admiral Montagu, who was desirous of taking part in the approaching restoration, left entire freedom of action to the fleet of the States-General. De Witt had made up his mind to the great blow to be struck, and writing to Vogelsangh, he quotes this fine sentence from the poet, which he is entitled to claim as his rule of conduct:

. Hic murus aheneus esto
Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.¹

Orders to resume hostilities were given to Ruyter, who had succeeded Obdam in the command of the fleet. To con-

¹ 'Let it be your rampart of steel, to have no reproach to make to yourself, and no fault to blush for.'

foim to the instructions which he had received, he transported his troops and those of the Danes to the island of Fionia and landed them at Odensee, under the enemy's fire. The Danish cavalry at first fell back and threw confusion into the ranks of the infantry. But a French captain, Henri de Culant, lord of Buat, employed in the service of the republic, who commanded the Dutch regiment of guards, threw himself into the water up to his waist, sword in hand, shouting: 'I go first, follow me!' His example carried away the troops, who drove back the Swedish cavalry and forced them to abandon the shore. The allied army, joined by reinforcements sent by the King of Denmark and the Elector of Brandenburg, took advantage of this first success to march without delay on Nyburg, where the Swedish troops were entrenched. The infantry of the States-General, amounting to 3,000 men, commanded by Colonels Killigrew and Meteren, made, pike in hand, an irresistible charge, which put the garrison to flight, and forced it to retreat in disorder into the town. Ruyter's ships bringing their broadsides to bear, thundered upon it with their guns, and obliged it to surrender at discretion, with the eleven regiments which were shut up in it. A hundred guns and a hundred and ten flags or standards remained in the hands of the conquerors.

Charles Gustavus, who had kept away from his main army in order to continue the siege of Copenhagen, was overwhelmed by the weight of this disaster, and only survived it a few months. His death in 1660, which left the succession to a king only five years of age, and made the Senate masters of the government, exposed Sweden to the difficulties of a minority. The ministers of his son Charles II. saw now the necessity for consenting without further delay to the conditions of mediation, and completed the pacification of the North by the treaty of Oliva, concluded with the King of Poland. They were grateful to the States for not yielding to the eager solicitations of the King of Denmark, who was impatient to recommence the war under more favourable conditions. Besides, they did not wish to compromise the safety of the Swedish fleet, blockaded in the port of Landskroon by Ruyter's

squadron, and for which the French ambassador, the Chevalier Terlon, had been vainly demanding free exit. When this was granted, peace between Denmark and Sweden was finally concluded at Copenhagen, under the guarantee of the mediating powers.

Denmark left to Sweden almost all her conquests, but regained, in addition to the part of Norway which she had lost, the castle of Cronenburg, which gave her back the key to the passage of the Sound, of which the revenues were also restored to her, on consideration of the payment of 35,000 crowns per annum. The treaty of Elbing, which at the very commencement of the warlike enterprises of Charles Gustavus had been intended to guarantee the interests of the United Provinces, received at length the ratification which had hitherto been delayed. The explanatory clauses, called clauses of elucidation, which made it still more advantageous for the republic, were inserted without any reservation.

The States-General were thus reaping the recompense of a policy at once bold and temperate. They prevented Sweden from establishing in the North a preponderance which would have been fatal to them. They obliged her to leave open the entrance to the Baltic Sea, of which they remained the masters, no other navy being capable of disputing their supremacy. The superiority of their fleet, the valour of their land forces, the skill and firmness of their diplomacy, had caused the credit of their government to be acknowledged. Weakened and humiliated in their last war with England, they had resumed their rank amongst the great powers. De Witt declared, according to a contemporaneous account, that during the war in the North 'he had always kept before his eyes, like two beacons, the honour and reputation of the States, as well as the interests and security of its commerce.' He might with good reason boast of having followed them, without deviating from his path. These two beacons had shown him the port, and they had successfully guided him in entering it.

CHAPTER V.

A REPUBLIC IN ITS RELATION TO TWO MONARCHIES—SUPREMACY OF HOLLAND—JOHN DE WITT RE-ELECTED GRAND PENSIONARY.

1660-1663.

Restoration of Charles II.—Honours paid to him at the Hague—Fresh demands of the Orange party—Early education of the Prince of Orange—Negotiations between De Witt and the Princess of Orange—The States of Holland take upon them the guardianship of her son—Revocation of the Act of Exclusion—Death of the Princess Royal—Conflicts of authority between the States and the other guardians of the Prince of Orange—The States resign the guardianship—Embassy of Beverwaert to London and of Downing to the Hague—Treaty between the United Provinces and England—Concessions made to Charles II.—Peace concluded with Portugal—Extradition of Charles I.'s judges—Negotiations with France—Embassy of Van Beuningen to Paris—Hostile dispositions of the ministers of Louis XIV.—Disputes to be settled—Treaty of alliance and commerce—Claims of Louis XIV. to the Low Countries—The Grand Pensionary seeks for the basis of an agreement—Embassy of Count d'Estrades to the Hague—His relations with De Witt—Offers of an understanding evaded by Louis XIV.—Promise of a preliminary agreement—Internal pacification—Agreement with Zealand—Securities taken against the Orange party—Dispute between the Count d'Estrades and the Prince of Orange—Alteration in the public prayers—Supremacy of the republican party—Re-election of the Grand Pensionary—His new functions—His family relations—His children—His works—His share in Delacourt's book, 'The Interest of Holland'—The manifesto of his policy.

THE Grand Pensionary of Holland had re-opened to the United Provinces an era of prosperity which they seemed likely henceforward to be able to enjoy at their ease. He was about to complete his work of recuperation by making the republic the ally of two great monarchies, without the necessity of purchasing those alliances by a change of government. The more difficult it might appear to obtain these diplomatic successes, the more they would redound to his honour.

The restoration of Charles II., whom England, weary of

anarchy, had recalled to the throne, made a rupture more likely than a treaty. The States of Holland were in danger of finding in him an irreconcilable enemy, who would never forgive them their alliance with Cromwell, his father's murderer, nor their hostility towards his nephew, the Prince of Orange. They anticipated, moreover, that he would inevitably demand the restoration of the stadtholdership in favour of the Prince of Orange.

The position was one of peril, and John de Witt set all his political ingenuity at work to avert its dangers. Determined to maintain the republican form of government as a trust confided to him, and not to sacrifice it to royal antipathies, he was all the more anxious to keep up friendly relations with England, under the reign of Charles II. as well as under the protectorate of Cromwell. He was convinced, as those about him said, 'that if the devil himself were sovereign of Great Britain, it would be necessary to live on friendly terms with him.'

On the first intelligence of the events which were preparing, Charles II. had hastily quitted Brussels, fearing that the governor of the Low Countries might detain him there, in order to demand from him the restoration of the conquests made by Cromwell in Spain. It was at Breda, on territory belonging to the States-General, that he received the declaration of Parliament restoring to him his kingdom and inviting him to come and take possession of it.

It was of importance to the States-General and the States of Holland that they should not allow themselves to be forestalled. On the very day on which the Parliament recalled Charles II. to England, the States-General had sent some of their deputies to him, to thank him solemnly for having arrested his steps on the territory of the United Provinces. At the same time the States of Holland, anxious to make him forget that they had formerly prohibited him from entering their province, in order to please Cromwell, invited him to repair to the Hague, where they were desirous of having the honour of receiving him.

Some days later, Charles II. made his solemn entry into

that town with the princes his brothers, the Princess Royal, and the young Prince of Orange. He was accompanied by the commissioners who had gone to meet him, followed by a train of seventy-two carriages, and escorted by 500 English gentlemen on horseback; the municipal troops, and the regiment of guards formed a double line as far as the house of Prince Maurice of Nassau, which had been prepared for his reception. The following day the States-General and the States of Holland came to offer him their congratulations, and the Grand Pensionary harangued in French the royal guest of the republic; he skilfully referred in his speech to the fidelity of the United Provinces to their alliance with England, in order thus to justify their conduct towards Cromwell. 'We consider it,' he added, 'in the highest degree an interest of state; we must even admit that for some years past that interest of state has done violence to our natural inclinations, since it was not in your august person that we found the representative of that country, and thus your Majesty may judge with what affection and zeal we shall in future cherish and maintain union and close correspondence between your kingdom and this republic; since, now that we see your Majesty restored, our natural inclination and the interests of the State are united.' The answer of Charles II. was at first somewhat curt, but the compliments paid him in thanking him for his courtesy induced him to throw aside his reserve. 'I am determined,' he said, 'to enter into a very close alliance with this State, and that is why, gentlemen, I should be jealous if you chose to prefer the friendship and alliance of any other prince to mine.' 'That alliance,' answered De Witt, 'ought to be as close as possible, and the principal one of both States.' To leave no doubt as to his opinions, Charles concluded as follows the conversation, every word of which has been faithfully reported in the secret proceedings of the States of Holland: 'I take into consideration that you were forced to treat with people who, having revolted against my father, were equally persistent against me; but now you will have to do with men of honour.' Those whom he proclaimed men of honour were the same

who, later, were, by their duplicity, to cause the republic to regret the intractable rudeness of the Protector.

Banquets succeeded to visits and deputations. Independently of two solemn feasts offered to Charles II. by the States of Holland, the expenses of his table were magnificently defrayed. Five deputies were his guests every day, 'whereby,' says a contemporary sarcastically, 'they did themselves quite as much honour and pleasure as they did the king.' Charles could not be indifferent to the sumptuous reception that was given him, nor to the marks of respect which he received. He was, moreover, anxious to secure for the young Prince of Orange the good-will of the States-General and of the States of Holland. With this object in view, he determined, after having contrived to hold several interviews with the Grand Pensionary, to attend their Assemblies in person.

In the week following his arrival at the Hague, commissioners delegated by each province came to fetch him from the house of Prince Maurice of Nassau and conducted him to the largest hall in the palace, where the members of the States-General were met together to receive him. The president for the week, Jacob de Veth, deputy of Zealand, ceded to him his place, and Charles stood bareheaded under the royal canopy which had been prepared in the Assembly where the representatives of a republic held their sittings. He renewed to the deputies his protestations of attachment. 'I love the United Provinces,' he declared, 'more than do all the other kings put together.' The deputies of Holland, who had come to meet him on his departure from the sitting of the States-General, then accompanied him to the hall of their Assembly, to receive, in their turn, his visit. He thanked them for their hospitality, assured them of his friendship and recommended to them the interests of his family. To give more weight to this recommendation, he delivered to the Grand Pensionary a declaration signed by himself and conceived in these terms: 'Gentlemen, since I leave here in your hands the princess my sister, and the Prince of Orange my nephew, two persons who are extremely dear to me, I beg you will take their interests to heart and let them experience the

effects of your kindness, on all occasions on which the princess my sister shall request it of you, assuring you that every effect of your good-will towards them shall be recognised by me, as if I had received it in my own person.'

De Witt, who would have liked to avoid making any engagement in favour of the Prince of Orange, was embarrassed by this pressing request, and betrayed his perplexity by the ill-concealed exaggeration of his flattery. 'As we do not deserve the honour of this illustrious and splendid visit,' he said, 'we could not hope that your Majesty would have condescended to stoop so low; but since your Majesty is pleased to assure us afresh of the honour of your friendship, we venture to hope, sire, that your Majesty will have read on our countenances, as well as on those of our subjects, the true joy and public rejoicing which we feel at your happy restoration; and, indeed, we should have wished to give still greater proof of it, being constrained to admit that its effects have not been in proportion with the royal and august dignity of your Majesty.' By the help of these protestations, De Witt avoided committing himself too far, being honestly anxious not to promise what he could not fulfil. 'Your Majesty,' he added, 'recommends to us the interests of the Princess Royal and of the Prince of Orange her son; we can assure you that we shall not fail to carry out your wishes. The mere consideration that they have the honour to be so closely connected with your Majesty would suffice to incline us to this; but we may add that we were already moved by several other reasons, amongst them the affection which the princess has always displayed for the special good of our province, and with regard to the Prince of Orange, by the recollection which we cherish of the merits of his ancestors.' The following day, the States of Holland came to bid farewell to their guest. The Grand Pensionary, in his address, still further surpassed in his adulation the marks of respectful deference which Charles II. had already received, without, however, making any fresh engagements in favour of the Prince of Orange.

In order to pay Charles royal honours up to the moment of his departure, the States of Holland, joined by the deputies of the States-General, solemnly escorted him to the harbour of Schevening. He bowed his thanks to the Assembly, pressed De Witt's hand, and was conducted in a barge dressed with flags to the admiral's ship, where Lord Montague immediately hoisted the royal standard. His sister and his nephew joined him there: he only took leave of them towards evening, when he sent an escort with them back to the shore, while the fleet set all sail for England. 'The whole population,' said the 'Dutch Mercury,' 'seemed to have met by appointment to witness the departure of a king who had been seen, some months before, walking in the streets of the towns, without attracting the least attention from the passers-by.'

This brief reception had cost the United Provinces nearly half a million of florins, and the States of Holland had contributed towards it more than 350,000. 'It had procured for them,' observes a contemporary ironically, 'treasures of promises, of which Charles II. was never niggardly,' and in which the States-General, 'who were not familiar with princes,' had full confidence. With more penetration, a deputy of Holland, Nicholas Stellingwerf, one of those whom the Stadtholder William II. had caused to be imprisoned at Loevenstein with the father of John de Witt, remarked 'that it would have been better to employ the money which had been spent in feasts and banquets in the purchase of cannon, cannon balls, and munitions of war.' This sombre prevision did not prevent the States of Holland from following, with regard to the King of England, a persevering policy of friendliness and concessions. Obedient to the advice of John de Witt, they proved to him their desire for conciliation by their care for the interests of his nephew.

The restoration of Charles II. was an unexpected turn of fortune for the House of Orange, and could not fail to induce hopes that the end of its trials was at hand. Its interests had hitherto been constantly endangered by the hostility which had always subsisted between the grandmother and the mother of the young prince. Their rivalry had shortly before

given Louis XIV. a pretext for occupying the principality of Orange, the government of which was contended for by the two princesses. The King of France seized the opportunity to intervene as a mediator, and obtained possession of the town from its governor, Count Frederick Dohna, nephew of the Princess Dowager, only undertaking to restore it when the Prince of Orange should have attained his majority. The education of the young prince had not, however, suffered from the misunderstanding between the two princesses. Not wishing him to be a spectator of their disagreements, they had agreed together to take the first step for his education by sending him to Leyden at the age of nine years, and they communicated their determination to the States-General, who thanked them for their message. They chose as his governor his uncle, Frederick of Nassau, lord of Zuylestein, a natural son of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, by whom he had been acknowledged, and who bore the reputation of a man of courage and sense. He displayed a passionate attachment for the House of Orange, and on the occasion of the birth of the young son of William II. caused the entrance gate of his residence to be adorned with texts taken from the Old Testament, in which he applied to him all that the prophets had predicted of the Messiah. The direction of the young prince's education was confided to the Calvinist minister Cornelius Trigland, who, having taken his doctor's degree at Leyden, had made himself known as a preacher at the Hague, and justified the maternal choice by his religious instructions as well as by his patriotic counsels. He wrote for his pupil the 'Idea or Portrait of a Christian Prince,' as Fénelon later wrote 'Télémaque' as the manual of education of the Duke of Burgundy. He lived long enough to see him restored to the power of his ancestors, and, in a farewell letter which he wrote to him before his death, he was able to exhort him to make a good use of it. The best masters were associated with Trigland in his duties. Professor Bornius was appointed director of the young prince's studies. A Frenchman named Chapuyzeau, 'who had written some comedies, and who was master of the Latin language as well as of the French,' was

to assist him as preceptor. The former secretary of the Prince of Orange, Huyghens de Zuylichem, father of the scholar Huyghens, was charged with his instruction in Dutch literature. An establishment was provided for the young prince with as much ceremonial as if he had retained his father's offices; the posts of first gentleman in waiting, of first equerry, and of first steward were filled by the sons of Heenvliet, Renswoude, and Boreel, all three members of noble families in the republic. Diplomacy was interested in the surroundings of the young prince, in anticipation of the destinies which might await him, and Louis XIV.'s ambassador at the Hague, De Thou, recommended the French Government to spare no expense 'in gaining over his governor and his masters.' He was thus being prepared by his education to take advantage of a turn of fortune which sooner or later was inevitable.

The death agony of the republic of England, in paving the way for the inevitable restoration of royalty, had already shown the republican party the necessity for coming to terms with the House of Orange. In the previous year the magistrates of Amsterdam, on the occasion of the marriage of the Prince of Anhalt to Henrietta Catherine, second daughter of the Princess Dowager, invited the family of the young prince to a splendid entertainment. Immediately after the restoration of Charles II., they accorded a solemn reception to the Princess Royal and her son. The Grand Pensionary himself, by well-timed advances, gave proof of the most conciliatory intentions. A month before the recall of the King of England he took part in a banquet given by the corporation, at which several of the adherents of the House of Orange assisted, and at which his father, formerly prisoner of the Stadtholder William II., was the first to propose the health of the young prince.

Charles II. once seated on his throne, good intentions were no longer sufficient, but must be followed by actions. De Witt was inclined to concessions, but wished to limit them. He proposed to obtain for the King of England's nephew the protection of the States, by making him, as he

was fond of saying, 'the child of Holland,' and by reopening to him the entrances to his ancestral offices, which had been closed by the Act of Exclusion. But, on the other hand, he did not wish that either the powers of stadtholder or even the military commands exercised by his ancestors should be disposed of in his favour, although declaring that the office of captain- and admiral-general could not fail to belong to him when he should attain his majority. He thought it far preferable thus to place him under obligations to the States, rather than encourage his princely ambition, by acknowledging his right to his paternal inheritance. A restoration brought about for the benefit of a child appeared to him to render inevitable the supremacy of the Orange party, which would thus be enabled to satisfy at its ease its political animosities and its leanings towards the King of England. This insurmountable distrust, which John de Witt himself confesses to, prevented him from entertaining a bolder project, the immediate restoration of the son of William II. to his father's offices, under the direction of the States, who should assume the regency till the majority of the young prince. By thus sealing the alliance between republican liberty and the power of the Prince of Orange, De Witt might have found the solution of all the difficulties he had to overcome, and under the weight of which he was destined at last to sink. He contented himself with expedients, and mistook a compromise for a solution.

The first offers of an agreement were made to him by the Princess Royal, on the subject of a proposal made to the States of Guelders by the deputies of Nimeguen to appoint the young prince captain-general. In order to gain over the Grand Pensionary to her son's cause, she had recourse to the intervention of one of his intimate advisers, Laurent Buysero, who acted as his secretary, and who has kept a curious register of all the negotiations which were confided to him. But at the very beginning of the conferences, De Witt, not wishing to encourage his hopes, declared that the proposal of the deputies of Nimeguen appeared to him inopportune, and that the youth of the prince did not allow of his being put in

possession of the ancestral power which was his by inheritance.

To leave an opening, however, for negotiations, he gave it to be understood that he might be able to induce the States of Holland to take upon themselves the education of the young prince, as well as the administration of his property, undertaking to pay him a considerable pension. 'If the States adopt him as their ward,' he said, 'they will give him the greatest possible proof of the interest they take in him.' The Princess Royal was disappointed rather than satisfied by these offers. She said as much to De Witt, who had come to see her at her country house of Honsholredyk, and represented to him that she had thought it right to consult the King of England, who made higher claims for her son. Ten days later, she repaired to the Hague, to inform De Witt of the answer which she had received from Charles II. 'This answer insists on the immediate nomination of the young prince to the great offices of the state,' writes the Grand Pensionary. 'Her Highness has declared to me that this is a command which she does not dare to disobey.' She thought she could reckon on the magistrates of Amsterdam, and, in particular, on the uncle of John de Witt, Cornelius de Graeff de Zuidpolsbroeck, with whom she had conferred; but, deterred from any compromise by the urgency of John de Witt, they finally refused their co-operation to the young prince's mother.

Irritated by this resistance, she determined to force the States of Holland to give her satisfaction by threatening them with the displeasure of the King of England and the revolt of the Orange party. She addressed to them a message, which she also communicated to the States-General, announcing to them that, being on the point of visiting the king her brother, she offered them her good offices. 'But,' she added, 'I hope to take with me the assurance that my son will obtain the civil and military posts which his forefathers have honoured since the origin of the republic, and that the States will in the meantime take the charge of his education.'

The States of Zealand, led away by the popular movement which was stirring up afresh the towns of the province,

hastened to respond to this appeal. They granted to the Prince of Orange the title of premier noble, which gave him the right of representing alone the whole body of the nobility in their Assembly, with the restriction that he should not make use of it before his majority. At the same time they decided that their deputies to the States-General should propose to reserve to him, in advance, the offices of captain- and admiral-general of the republic, in order that he might exercise those functions at the age of eighteen. They sent also a solemn deputation to the States of Holland, under the leadership of their councillor pensionary, Adrian Veth, to demand from them his nomination by anticipation as stadtholder of the two provinces. Notwithstanding the moderation of the first minister of Zealand, who kept up the most friendly relations with De Witt, this step, encouraged by the States-General, could not fail to be the signal for a fresh coalition against the States of Holland.

Symptoms of disunion were beginning, moreover, to be displayed in their own Assembly. One of the most highly esteemed members of the nobility, De Wimmenum, president of the board of councillor deputies, after having enjoyed the favours of the republican party, appeared desirous of giving proofs of his devotion to the Orange party. He induced the nobles to pronounce in favour of the restoration of the stadtholdership. The deputies of Leyden and Enckhuyzen supported this proposal, while those of Haarlem and Alkmar demanded that the post of captain- and admiral-general should be guaranteed to the prince, even if it should be to the exclusion of that of stadtholder. The Grand Pensionary was inclined to this compromise, but, fearing that he might fail in getting it accepted, he gave the partisans of the son of William II. to understand that they could not but gain by waiting the course of events, and brought round the Assembly to a fresh proposition. The States of Holland, hastening to accept it, consented, by a unanimous vote, to direct the education of the young prince, in order, as they stated, 'to bring him up in the practice of all the virtues which might render him fit for the functions, dignities, and offices which had

belonged to his predecessors.' They promised besides to watch over the preservation of his lands and goods, and to provide sumptuously for the expenses of his education, paying him at the same time an annual pension. But they avoided any engagement by which they might have appeared to agree to the appointment to the stadtholdership demanded on his behalf. To re-open to him, however, an entrance to the powers of his ancestors, they revoked the Act of Exclusion, and declared that they had only consented to it in order to satisfy the demands of Cromwell. While refusing to restore to the Prince of Orange his ancestral offices, they thus left to him the hope of some day resuming possession of them.

The Princess Royal, though her hopes were not entirely satisfied, saw the necessity for proceeding cautiously, and before embarking for England she followed the advice of her wisest counsellors, who urged upon her to accept the offers of the States of Holland. Having on September 29, 1660, sent them a first answer, still savouring somewhat of menace, she now addressed to them a letter in which she showed herself disposed towards an agreement, by submitting to them the choice of the commissioners who were to superintend her son's education. She proposed some members of their Assembly whom they could not look upon with suspicion and joined to them the Grand Pensionary De Witt, to whom she paid the most flattering testimony. 'Since your Noble and High Mightinesses,' she wrote, 'have consented to use your prudence in taking care that the prince our son shall be perfectly instructed, from his earliest age, in the privileges and customs of this country and the character of its inhabitants, in which we have found by experience that the Councillor Pensionary De Witt is profoundly acquainted and is accustomed to give freely and undisguisedly his excellent instructions, it will be very agreeable to us if your Noble and High Mightinesses will include him in the said commission.'

The rivalry between the two princesses was nearly hindering the conclusion of this compromise. The Princess Dowager remonstrated at the appointments made by her daughter-in-law without the participation of the other guardians. In

accordance with the advice of the Elector of Brandenburg, the young prince's uncle, she proposed the nomination of commissioners hostile to the republican party, in order to regain thus the confidence of the Orange party, who were displeased at the concessions made by the Princess Royal. The States of Holland, however, gave the preference to the commissioners designated by the young prince's mother. These were Louis of Nassau, lord of Beverwaert, known for his moderation, De Noortwyck, one of the most loyal partisans of the new government, Abraham de Beveren, lord of Barendrecht, burgomaster of Dordrecht, Cornelius de Graeff, lord of Zuidpolsbroeck, burgomaster of Amsterdam and Peter Forest, town councillor of Alkmar and president of the Court of Audit; the last three friends or relations of the Grand Pensionary, who was appointed to assist, or rather to direct them. An annual sum of from 36,000 to 40,000 florins was voted for the education of the young prince and the powers given to the commissioners were carefully limited, so as only to be exercised with the participation of the two Princesses of Orange, but under the sovereign control of the States. Beverwaert, who had been sent to London as the ambassador of the republic, was commissioned to represent them with the Princess Royal during her residence in England.

The reconciliation seemed to be accomplished. The Grand Pensionary of Holland proposed to take advantage of it in the interests of the prince as well as in those of the state. 'We ought,' he wrote confidentially to Beverwaert, 'to keep to the two following rules: first, to neglect nothing in teaching the prince virtue and learning, as well as a perfect acquaintance both with the customs and rights of this country and with the character of its inhabitants, in order that he may acquire their love and affection; secondly, to conduct this education in such a manner that the magistrates and inhabitants of this country may perceive that it could not be confided to men more honest or more attached to the House of Orange.' The Princess Royal, perceiving the loyalty with which De Witt had kept his word, showed on her part the most favourable dispositions, when suddenly these hopes of a

good understanding were sadly disappointed. Six weeks after her arrival in England, the sister of Charles II., attacked by small-pox, to which her husband, the Stadtholder William II., had fallen a victim, died suddenly of that disease, on December 24, 1660. This event, which left the young Prince of Orange an orphan at the age of ten years, was an equally fatal blow to the Grand Pensionary of Holland. In her will the Princess Royal implored the King of Great Britain to act as a father towards the son she left behind. In response to this last appeal, Charles II. informed the States of Holland that he had accepted the legacy of the maternal guardianship, and appointed a commission presided over by the lord chancellor, to superintend in his name the interests of his nephew concurrently with the Dutch commissioners. In spite of the interchange of the most friendly notes, this intervention awakened uneasiness in the States of Holland, by leading them to fear inevitable rivalries. Moreover, the death of the Princess Royal restored to the grandmother of the Prince of Orange her authority in the education of her grandson, and the Princess Dowager, dissatisfied with the choice of commissioners appointed on the nomination of her daughter-in-law, appeared little disposed to come to an understanding with them. She insisted that they should work in her house and in her presence, not choosing to acknowledge any authority but her own.

Constantly renewed conflicts of authority set the guardians of the young prince and the States of Holland at variance. Thus they disputed for the possession of a coffer which the Princess Royal had left at the Hague, and in which were inclosed some secret papers which had belonged to the late Stadtholder. The States of Holland, fearing that it might be made away with, were determined to keep it in their custody till the majority of William II.'s son, while the Princess Dowager arrogantly claimed it and refused to submit to the authority of the court of justice, which at length got the better of her resistance. 'It was,' wrote De Witt, 'a pretension to which no Prince of Orange had ever dared to raise his thoughts, and which is so highly offensive to the state, that it would be a sufficient reason, if such sentiments were

inspired in the Prince of Orange, to prevent the state from ever confiding to him any authority or power.'

The private advisers of the young prince seemed at the same time determined to provoke the States of Holland, by wishing to occupy those parts of the ancient palace of the Princes of Orange which had remained empty; they obtained possession of the keys, and the States, who claimed, in their position as sovereigns of the republic, to be the masters of the public property, demanded that they should be given back to them. 'It is sad to see,' said John de Witt on this occasion, 'that all sorts of means are tried to render useless to the Prince of Orange the resolution taken by the States of Holland with regard to his education, and that the said States are as much disgusted as their commissioners, who are, however, so well disposed to the service and promotion of his Highness.'

The King of England continued to encourage this ill-will by the animosity which he showed towards the States. The ambassador of the States-General in London, Beverwaert, represented to him vainly, with his accustomed frankness, 'that if his own son were concerned, he would rather see him recognised by the States of Holland as the child of the republic, than have him forced by a premature nomination on the acceptance of those in authority.' Charles persisted nevertheless in deciding on all occasions against the Dutch commissioners who were charged with the education of his nephew. On one occasion he withdrew his favour from the Princess Royal's secretary, Nicholas Oudart, whom he could not forgive for having previously made him sign a letter expressing to them his satisfaction. On another occasion he addressed to them the most offensive complaints, reproaching them, amongst other grievances, with not having placed a dais in the apartments of the Prince of Orange. It was more especially towards the Grand Pensionary of Holland that he displayed these hostile sentiments, reproaching him with having usurped the power which ought to have belonged to his nephew. Instead of giving him the satisfaction which De Witt had hoped to obtain, Charles refused to send back the Act of Exclusion, which the States of Holland had just repealed.

The Grand Pensionary would have desired, moreover, that the King should have attested 'that this article of the treaty concluded with Cromwell, far from having been suggested to the Protector, had been rigorously exacted as a condition of peace, without any persuasion having been spared to induce him to renounce it;' he had himself drawn up the terms of this justification. But Charles evaded the demand which he had promised to comply with and on which De Witt was careful not to insist. The Grand Pensionary expressed nevertheless his indignation at the allegations of the King of England, who pretended to have received from him at the Hague, on behalf of the Prince of Orange, as the price of oblivion for his past conduct, promises which he had not fulfilled. De Witt repelled this injurious accusation. 'It appears to me scandalous,' he wrote to the ambassador of the States, 'that in his interview with you the chancellor should have let it be understood that in consequence of my promises the king had deigned to forget what had passed, as if we had demanded of his Majesty a pardon of which, thank God, we have no need.' 'I am not surprised, however,' he adds, 'that I have the reputation over there of being opposed to the interests of the Prince of Orange, for I have, at all times, placed them after those of the state.'

These mutual recriminations threatened an approaching rupture. The signal for it was given by the convention signed between the King of England and the Elector of Brandenburg, who was passionately attached to the interests of the Princess Dowager, whose daughter he had married. The King and the Elector, as uncles of the young prince, shared with his grandmother the guardianship of their nephew, but left in her hands power amounting to unlimited authority. As regarded the States of Holland, they did not appear inclined to do much more than tolerate their participation, and only consented to admit it in order that the son of William II. might continue to receive his pension. They were careful, moreover, to show their distrust of the States, by claiming the right to impose upon them fresh delegates for the superintendence of the young prince's education. They

required them not only to add to the members of the Assembly already charged with that office the commissioners that the Princess Dowager had before proposed, but also to recognise the right of the other provinces to be represented by deputies chosen by themselves.

The States of Holland were indignant at such changes being made without their consent in the conventions which they had agreed to with the Princess Royal. Forced to abdicate if they yielded, or to come to a quarrel if they resisted, there remained only one step for them to take, the least dangerous and the most cautious, that of renouncing the education of the Prince of Orange the moment that they found themselves no longer free to direct it as they pleased. De Witt had already let it be seen that he would not hesitate to withdraw, in the event of contests arising. 'If those who are the nearest relations of his Highness,' he wrote, 'make it clear that they do not perceive that if the States took upon themselves the trouble of the guardianship, it was in the interest of his Highness and in no way for our own, there will be less difficulty in inducing the States not to meddle any longer in the said guardianship, than there was in inducing them to make up their minds to do so.'

This prediction was justified. In answer to the provocation offered them, the States of Holland, notwithstanding the contrary advice of eight towns, amongst others those of Rotterdam, Haarlem, Leyden, and Enckhuyzen, determined to renounce for the present a superintendence which compromised their sovereign dignity, from the moment when they could no longer exercise it except with the approbation of the other guardians, two of whom were foreign princes.

In wishing, as he himself declared, 'to make himself master of the republic through the ties he had contracted with the Princess Dowager and the Elector of Brandenburg, and by their intrigues,' Charles II. had detached the States from his nephew's interests. 'He found them determined not to permit him to meddle in the affairs of the prince, through whom he would have liked to reign over them himself.' The Grand Pensionary, disappointed in the efforts at conciliation

for which he had loyally striven, showed himself the decided partisan of resistance. According to the despatch of a French agent, he expressed himself thus: 'No doubt,' he said, 'good policy demands that we should show the greatest deference towards so great a king; but if it is assumed that the King of England's authority should oblige free states to do anything by force, I shall oppose it in the name of Holland; supposing that Holland does not agree to this opposition, I shall oppose it in the name of the town of Dordrecht, of which I am the deputy; if the town of Dordrecht will not authorise me, I shall oppose it in the name of my family; and finally, in the event of my family not being of my mind, it will remain to me to oppose it alone, as far as I am able.'

The disputes with regard to the guardianship of the Prince of Orange could not but be fatal to the negotiations entered into by the United Provinces with the new King of England for the conclusion of a treaty. They had till now rendered useless the embassy sent to London with the object of making Charles II. the ally of the republic. The States-General had hastened to recall the ambassador Nieupoort, who, in consequence of his close relations with Cromwell, and the opposition he had made to the restoration of Charles II., could not be left with the new king. They had designated as his successors four envoys extraordinary: Simon van Hoorn, burgomaster of Amsterdam, one of the most trusty confidants of John de Witt, Michael van Gogh, deputy of Zealand, Joachim Ripperda, deputy of Groningen and Louis of Nassau, lord of Beverwaert, who, by dissuading the Stadtholder William II. from besieging Amsterdam, and thus preventing him from provoking a civil war, as a consequence of his attempt at a coup d'état, had won the confidence of the republican party without losing that of the Orange party. Beverwaert, whom they had chosen as the chief of the embassy, and whom they had sent on in advance, was likely to be welcome to Charles, from his birth and connections. A natural son of the Stadtholder Maurice of Nassau, he was the devoted adviser of the Princess Royal, and his particular friend was the Marquis of Ormonde, the

King of England's minister, whose son, the Earl of Ossory, married his eldest daughter. His second daughter married, later, Lord Arlington; the youngest, Charlotte of Nassau, became celebrated in London at the meetings presided over by the Duchess of Mazarin, surrounded by her train of men of letters—Saint-Real, Saint-Evremont, and many more. All three were worthy of their mother, who, endowed with the most seductive charms, was the best auxiliary of her husband's negotiations. Beverwaert's scrupulous honesty contributed, moreover, to ensure for him the confidence of the English Government.

Scarcely had he arrived in London when he was informed that, unknown to him, Charles II. had bestowed on his son Odyk, whose irregularities and debts were a dishonour to his father's name, a portion of the profits obtained by the import of Rhine wines, and he believed that this liberality amounted to an income of 400*l.* This appeared to him opposed to the oath by which the ambassadors of the republic engaged to accept no gifts. That he might not be accused of failing in it, even involuntarily, he sent in his resignation, refusing even to carry on his functions till the States, better informed than himself, had pronounced that his son did not enjoy the privilege which had been promised him. The interests of the republic could not be confided to a diplomatist better fitted to serve them by means of his good reputation.

While the States had made choice of an ambassador as loyal as he was conciliatory, and who gave the new king the most entire satisfaction, Charles II. had sent back to the Hague Cromwell's intriguing minister, Downing, well known for the hostile sentiments which he had never ceased to display towards the United Provinces. Compromised by his services to the republican party, he had not waited for the restoration before insinuating himself into the favour of Charles II. While the latter was at the Hague, where, notwithstanding the prohibition of the States of Holland, he had come secretly to visit his sister, an individual in disguise was shown into his presence.

Downing, having made himself known, begged the prince to forgive a course of action which the misfortunes of the

times had forced upon him, and advised him to withdraw without delay, the States having promised to deliver him up to Cromwell. According to the same narrative, Charles II. taking advantage of the warning, departed in great haste; and Downing, in order to convince him of the service which he pretended to have rendered him, sent trusty persons to arrest him, after giving him time to place himself in safety. Even supposing that this story was only an invention, Downing, it is certain, took steps to regain the favour of the new king, through the intervention of his brother-in-law, Lord Howard, who had openly declared himself in favour of the royalist party. After a long interview with him, Charles II. created him a knight, and promised to leave him in possession of his post. His return to the Hague, signalised immediately on his arrival by fresh disputes about etiquette, soon showed, as De Witt wrote, that 'the English always remain English, and that changes of government produce no change in their dispositions.'

The King of England appeared, moreover, to have lent himself to negotiations only to supply his financial needs, and he applied vainly to Beverwaert to obtain for him from the States a loan of some millions of florins. The quarrels which he stirred up made an agreement hopeless. Not wishing to derogate from Cromwell's pretensions, Charles II. refused to allow a right of fishing within a radius of ten miles along the coast, to the great prejudice of the trade of the United Provinces. Their fishermen had even been driven with violence from the British seas, and the States-General could not get their complaints listened to. 'I have declared to Downing,' wrote De Witt, haughtily, 'that sooner than acknowledge this imaginary sovereignty over the seas, or even receive from the English, as a concession, that freedom of navigation and fishing which belong to us by natural right, we would shed our last drop of blood.'

A year later, the negotiations, which seemed to promise no hope of success, were happily concluded. Beverwaert, obliged to return to Holland on account of his wife's health, and disheartened by the unfavourable reception given to his proposals,

had sorrowfully renounced the completion of the work of his embassy. The other plenipotentiaries who remained in London after his departure had also received orders to return home immediately, when the English Government made up its mind to give them the satisfaction so long delayed. By the terms of the treaty, dated September 4, 1662, the right of fishing was restored to the inhabitants of the United Provinces, while on the other hand the right of English ships to a salute was no longer disputed in the British seas, and in compensation for the losses which the East India Company might have caused the English, the island of Pouleron was restored to them. The two powers, moreover, engaged to refuse shelter or protection to exiles and rebels who should seek a refuge on English or Dutch territory. No engagement was entered into in favour of the Prince of Orange; and Charles II., having thus desisted from his demands, renewed the most friendly declarations. 'If we yield to you the honour of having been the first to put the treaty into execution,' he wrote to the States-General, thanking them for having restored to him the island of Pouleron, 'we shall at least have the honour of carrying it on, and of making it appear by our actions that we shall be the last to infringe it. The Grand Pensionary gladly acknowledged 'that nothing could be added to the contentment felt by the States at the sentiments of confidence and friendship which his Majesty expressed towards them.'

In order that dispositions which had hitherto been hostile should have suddenly become so favourable, it had been necessary for the Grand Pensionary not to allow himself to be disheartened by any failures. Determined to refuse to the King of England any concession that might imperil the preservation of the republican government, to which he had sworn fidelity, De Witt tried to gain his good graces by sparing no efforts towards securing efficient support among those who surrounded him. With this view he appealed to the Queen of Bohemia, aunt of Charles II., at whose court she had sought refuge, in the hope that she would show her gratitude for the hospitality afforded her during her residence in Holland. Perceiving that she did not possess sufficient influence to ren-

Charles's
aunt

der him the services which he expected from her, he attempted by means of a bribe to gain over one of the king's ministers, the Marquis of Ormonde, who, like most courtiers, promised much and did nothing. The support given by the Earl of Clarendon was more sincere and more efficient. 'I do not doubt,' writes De Witt to the Chancellor of England after the conclusion of the treaty, 'that you will give the last touches to a work which is in reality your own, and that you will be the instrument which will cause it to produce the effects necessary for the preservation and strengthening of friendship and intercourse between the two nations.'

The peace with Portugal, concluded by means of the urgent intervention of the Grand Pensionary, was at the same time a cause of satisfaction to which the King of England, who had just married the Portuguese Infanta, could not venture to appear indifferent. The republic had refused, hitherto, to allow Portugal to retain the conquest of Brazil, which she still hoped to recover from her; but negotiations had been abruptly broken off by the treason of the Portuguese ambassador, Ferdinand Telles de Faro, who forsook his post in order to go over to the service of the King of Spain. They were resumed by Count Miranda, who carried them through in spite of the opposition of Zealand and Guelders, who were both concerned in the West India Company, and to whom the loss of Brazil would therefore be prejudicial. Under pressure from Holland, the States-General in August 1661 voted, by a majority, for the treaty, in favour of which Schulenburg, deputy of Groningen, the president for the week, who was accused by the States of his province of having allowed himself to be bought over, had given his decision. According to the conventions stipulated on each side, the United Provinces, abandoning Brazil to Portugal, retained the Portuguese colonies which they had taken possession of in the West Indies; and in addition, the States-General obtained the promise of an indemnity of 8,000,000 florins, payable in sixteen years, as the price of their renunciation of Brazil. The exchange of the ratifications of the treaty was still kept in suspense for more than a year, in consequence of the intrigues of Downing, who did not wish to leave the merit of it to the States-

General; but De Witt's firmness overcame all these difficulties, and he was able to take credit to himself with Charles for the efficient co-operation which he had given to English diplomacy.

Further displays of good-will appeared to De Witt no less necessary for satisfying the King of England, who had been irritated at his opposition to the restoration of the stadtholdership, and he consented to concessions from which his reputation has suffered. Since the return of the new king to London, the promises of amnesty had been succeeded by cruel acts of reprisal, and the English Government, impatient to give effect to them, had complained on several occasions of the shelter afforded in Holland to the judges of Charles I. Six months after the restoration the French ambassador at the Hague, De Thou, writes: 'It is stated that three of the late king's judges are at Amsterdam, and that if Charles II. demands that they should be given up, he will not be refused, but they will be allowed to escape.' This information was correct. Downing, therefore, did not wish to let himself be taken by surprise if the presence of the regicides were notified to him. No outlaw being at that time on their territory, the States, notwithstanding some hesitation which was combated by De Witt, yielded to the request made to them by the English ambassador, without suspecting that they might have cause to repent of it. In conformity with his demand, they furnished him with a blank warrant, with directions to the Grand Pensionary to execute it whenever he should be required to do so. This violation of the law of nations was in accordance with the manners of the times; it was frequently a mark of consideration from one king to another. Louis XIV. had shortly before given up to Charles II. an English refugee, and some years later he caused a Protestant agent, Roux of Marseilles, to be carried off from Sweden by means of an ambuscade, and mercilessly executed in Paris. It would have appeared, however, that a republic which prided herself on giving shelter to all outlaws could not without dishonour infringe the laws of hospitality, and it was in defiance of all her traditions that she set them aside.

Seven months after the consent so imprudently given to

Downing by the States of Holland, the three judges of Charles I. whom the magistrates of Amsterdam had on a former occasion shielded from him returned secretly to Delft to fetch away their wives, believing they had no longer any danger to fear. They were Barghstead, formerly governor of the Tower of London, Corbet, and Okey, the latter of whom had been Downing's benefactor, having obtained for him his first employment under Cromwell. Downing, who troubled himself little about gratitude, having been informed of their arrival, presented to the Grand Pensionary of Holland his demand that the blank warrant which had been given him should be executed, quoting to that effect the last resolution of the States. De Witt, bound by his instructions, thought himself obliged to obey them, hoping perhaps that before they could be arrested the three ex-members of the English Parliament might have time to take to flight. But Downing had caused them to be so closely watched that it was impossible for them to escape his search, and he had them arrested before they had had time to suspect the danger which threatened them. He hastened to demand their extradition, and the States were not at liberty to refuse it without bringing upon themselves a declaration of war. In vain they tried to throw upon the magistrates of Delft the responsibility of giving the orders, either in the hope, by fresh delays, of affording the prisoners a last chance of escape, or to spare themselves the humiliation of giving them up. Without paying any attention to the earnest supplications addressed to them, and in spite of the courageous resistance made by some of the deputies of their Assembly, they delivered up to Downing the victims for whom Charles II.'s vengeance was waiting. 'They wished,' writes De Witt to the Chancellor Clarendon, 'to anticipate what could only be demanded of them in virtue of the treaty,' of which they hoped thus to hasten the conclusion.

The weakness into which the Grand Pensionary had allowed himself to be hurried caused him, however, some remorse. 'It would give satisfaction here,' he writes to the ambassador Beverwaert, 'if the King of England would allow himself to be persuaded to pardon the culprits, on the intercession of their

Noble and High Mightinesses. Will you be so good as to feel your way discreetly and give me your opinion, for such an intercession cannot be made without the almost certainty of its not being refused?' Charles II. cared little about these barren wishes, and before the ambassador of the republic, convinced of the uselessness of taking any steps, had ventured to ask for their pardon, the three regicides had been executed in London on a charge of high treason.

A clamour of indignation arose in the United Provinces at the iniquity of this concession, with which De Witt was reproached as an act of cowardice. The King of England's ministers hastened to testify their gratitude, of which Charles II. did not fail to give him compromising proofs. The Grand Pensionary felt himself embarrassed by these encomiums, which ascribed to him the merit due to Downing. 'I should have been better pleased,' he writes to Beverwaert, 'if in showing his satisfaction the king had not named me, or at any rate if you had been so good as not to refer to it in your despatch. Making it the glory and the aim of my actions to uphold my superiors, the States of Holland, I should be unable to succeed if I did not cause the justice that is their due to be rendered in full to their Noble and High Mightinesses.' Thus, in the letter which he addressed to the Chancellor Clarendon, while overstepping the bounds of the most obsequious protestations, he defended himself from having contributed to satisfy Charles II. otherwise than by his own good-will, and by supporting the friendly sentiments which he had observed amongst the members of the Assembly. He had no intention, moreover, of giving any opportunity for fresh royal exactions. He had therefore caused to be inserted in the resolution on the extradition, 'that the authorisation given to Downing is only available for this once, and is to be no precedent for the future.'

These concessions, humiliating as they were, would not perhaps have sufficed to bring back Charles II. to an alliance with the United Provinces: it was the fear of a union between the republic and France against England which obliged him to conclude with the States-General the treaty which he had refused them for the last two years.

In order to obtain it, the States-General hastened the conclusion of the negotiations begun with France by their ambassador in ordinary, Boreel, and recognised the necessity for giving him the assistance of another envoy. The disordered condition of his private affairs, the retirement in which he lived with his wife Jacoba Carels, described, in a contemporary narrative, as 'a good, fat housekeeper,' a 'regular old woman of Amsterdam,' and the exaggerated simplicity of his mode of life, prevented him from keeping up the relations which were essential for his credit. 'Somewhat misanthropic and even surly,' say some of his contemporaries, 'he would have been better suited to a Northern court than to that of France. The States, out of consideration for his long services not wishing to recall him, appointed, as ambassador extraordinary, one of their most skilful diplomatists, Conrad van Beuningen, who had already represented them at the court of the King of Denmark during the wars in the North, and to whom the Grand Pensionary accorded his entire confidence. They associated with him John van Ghent, deputy of Guelders, who was attached to the interests of Holland, and Justus de Huybert, deputy of Zealand, pensionary of the town of Zierikzee.

Conrad van Beuningen, who had caused his inflexible firmness to be appreciated in the negotiations of the war in the North, was to have a great part to play during the period of his embassy in France. His somewhat haughty stiffness might stand in his way, and the art of conciliating sometimes failed him; but he joined to an obstinate inflexibility of character the resources of a mind fertile in expedients and a power of speech which never failed him in repartee. Charms of conversation, ease of manners, and the most varied acquirements, completed his diplomatic merits. Having a high opinion of himself, he did not allow himself to be intimidated by the majesty of royalty. After holding his own with imperturbable coolness against Charles Gustavus, king of Sweden, he did not find himself in any degree more embarrassed in treating with Louis XIV. amidst the splendours of Versailles whilst not submitting subserviently to monarchical etiquette. The King of France having one day laughed at an incorrect

expression which escaped him, 'Sire,' he said, 'if I made use of it, it was to enrich the French language.' He had the gift of readiness; the king's ministers reproaching him jestingly with no longer receiving their statements with the same confidence which he had shown them at the beginning of his embassy, he retorted, 'When I arrived here, as a Protestant, I believed that we were saved by faith; but now that I am living in the midst of Catholics I believe that we are only saved by works.' Proud of being a citizen of Amsterdam, he boasted of having placed the republic which he served on a level with the greatest kings.

The ministers of the States-General found France not only freed from the yoke of factions, but also delivered by the treaty of the Pyrenees from the foreign war which fostered internal dissensions. Mazarin, who was approaching the end of his career, had just succeeded in pacifying the kingdom and enlarging its boundaries. He had triumphed over the Fronde and imposed peace on Spain, from whom he recovered her greatest conquest, the great Condé, whom civil dissensions had unhappily made the ally of the enemies of France. Mazarin could now die in peace; he left the crown to a prince twenty-two years of age, who was ambitious to govern alone, and had prepared himself for the exercise of the royal authority. Van Beuningen extolled 'the promptitude, clearness, judgment, and reasonableness which he employed in the expedition of business, the amenity of his address, his patience in listening, and the art which he possessed of expressing his thoughts with a force and often with an eloquence which astonished those who heard the decision with which he spoke on public affairs.' He knew both how to make himself loved and how to make himself feared.

In taking on himself the government of his kingdom, Louis XIV. was gratifying the wishes of his people, who, wearied out by the fruitless agitations of party strife, preferred to be governed by a sovereign rather than by ministers. He held in his hand, so to say, the entire nation, which submitted voluntarily to a master. Mazarin dead, and Fouquet disgraced, he had no longer anything to expect from his

councillors but obedience to his will. The States-General had none the less to consider the line of conduct which his ministers might induce him to pursue in the direction of foreign politics. The post of secretary of state for foreign affairs continued to be held by Loménie de Brienne, who had remained faithful to the ancient traditions of French diplomacy in favour of the United Provinces, and whom Louis XIV. jestingly reproached with being 'a true Dutchman.' Two other ministers shared his opinions, the chancellor, Séguier, and the secretary of state for war, Michel le Tellier, who had just been authorised by Louis XIV. to associate with himself, with right of reversion, his young son Louvois, in whom the United Provinces were hereafter to find their most implacable enemy. They were eagerly supported by Marshal Turenne, who was directly related, through his mother, Isabella of Nassau, daughter of William the Silent, to the family of the Princes of Orange, under whose orders he had served his first campaign in the War of Independence. The services which he had rendered to the royal cause during the Fronde had earned him the gratitude of the French court, and he appeared disposed to use his influence in the interests of the republic.

But a new policy, one of hostility to the United Provinces, was beginning to find favour. It was encouraged by two ministers, of whom one wished to establish the commercial supremacy of France, and the other was determined to obtain for her fresh accessions of territory. These were Colbert and Lionne, who had both been bequeathed by Mazarin to Louis XIV., and who formed with Le Tellier the ministerial triumvirate of the first years of his reign.

Colbert, son of a shopkeeper of Rheims, had been employed in the service of the cardinal, who had discovered and appreciated his merits. The enemy of Fouquet, he had contributed to his downfall and had supplanted him. Admitting no distraction from public affairs, to which he devoted sixteen hours daily, as hard towards himself as towards others, obstinate and imperious, he had succeeded in pleasing Louis XIV. by contenting himself with a subordinate position, until

he was invested with the title of controller-general. Sure of the royal confidence, Colbert was able to pursue the execution of his great designs in all security, aided by the resources of his genius. He had undertaken to create industry and commerce in France. He stimulated manufactures, and, emulous of placing the French market beyond the reach of competition, he determined to close it to foreign products by means of heavy duties. Further, to assist navigation, and to give an impulse to the mercantile marine, he encouraged the foundation of great companies, which in the Baltic, the West Indies, and in the East, were to put a check to the long undisputed supremacy of Dutch commerce. He was therefore more disposed to treat the republic as a rival than as an ally.

Hugues Lionne, a gentleman of Dauphiné, born in 1611, and nephew of the former secretary of state, Servien, owed, like Colbert, his fortune to Mazarin. Appointed private secretary to Anne of Austria, entrusted with the task of preparing the conclusion of the treaty of peace between France and Spain, a skilful and fortunate negotiator in the Rhine Confederation, he had easily obtained, after the cardinal's death, the direction of foreign affairs, which was officially conferred on him when he succeeded as secretary of state to the post of Loménie de Brienne. Industrious, although fond of pleasure, his temperament was easy, supple, adroit and inexhaustible in resources. A complete master of the art of diplomatic corruption, knowing the price to be set on consciences in every court, he made himself familiar with the manners, language, politics and interests of the different nations of Europe. He could, therefore, easily assist by his negotiations the ambitious designs of Louis XIV., and thus contribute to the greatness of his reign. Impatient to avail himself of the weakness of the House of Austria, in order to resume the interrupted work of Richelieu and Mazarin and to obtain the Low Countries for France, he had little hope of finding the States-General favourable to this work of aggrandisement, and was determined if possible to do without their help in obtaining the annexation which he coveted.

The offers of a renewal of alliance proposed by the States-General had hitherto, therefore, been evaded. Moreover, the political antagonism of the two governments, the one founded on maxims of absolute power and the other on the principle of the free discussion of public affairs, placed obstacles in the way of friendly relations, by causing frequent occasions of collision between the king and the republic. The unpublished correspondence of Cardinal Mazarin and the French ambassador at the Hague, De Thou, shows the extent of the demands made by the French Government. He desired the States-General to prohibit their subjects, under severe penalties, 'from publishing in future any book relating to France without having previously obtained the authorisation of the king's ministers.' The States, notwithstanding their friendly dispositions, could not submit to such pretensions. There were other differences even more prejudicial to the negotiations. The edict of 1659, prohibiting foreign vessels from trading in the ports of France, except on payment of a crown per ton, drew forth vehement remonstrances from the United Provinces. They declared that the Dutch people, having been exempted by Henry IV. from the *droit d'aubaine*, which prevented strangers from inheriting property in France, were entitled to enjoy the same advantages as French subjects, and to obtain on that account the remission of a tax which weighed heavily on their commerce. But Colbert, who considered the tonnage duty as indispensable to the prosperity of the French mercantile marine, had constituted himself its obstinate defender. 'It will require much time and much prudence to convince him,' wrote Van Beuningen. The guarantee of the integrity of their possessions demanded by the States from France was another obstacle to an understanding between the two governments. The French court refused to include in it the town of Rhyenberg and the lordship of Ravenstein, whose possession was disputed with the republic, the one by the Archbishop of Cologne, and the other by the Duke of Neuburg and the Elector of Brandenburg, who each maintained his right to it. The States-General, on their side, considering Rhyenberg as

one of the ramparts of their dominions, would not renounce their claims to occupy it. 'To speak of the restitution of Rhyenberg,' writes De Witt, 'would be enough to upset everything.'

The free right of fishing still more directly concerned the States-General; they could not prevail on England to allow them the enjoyment of it so long as it had not been accorded to them by France, and they therefore made it a condition of their treaty with Louis XIV. 'The commissioners charged to report upon it to the States,' writes De Witt, 'were unanimous in their opinion, and considered that we could in no way relax the terms demanded for the guarantee of fishing rights. The first order which our ambassadors are about to receive will be their recall, whether they succeed in concluding the treaty according to their instructions or are forced to leave without doing anything.' Fortunately for the United Provinces, the King of France took offence at the demands of England. 'I must admit,' he declared to his ambassador in London, 'that I have the same interest in this guarantee as the Dutch, since the right of fishing may just as well be refused by England to my subjects as to those of the States-General.' The chief difficulty which was delaying the treaty between France and the republic was thus removed, and it was shortly afterwards signed on April 22, 1662.

The alliance was both offensive and defensive. The King of France engaged, in the event of an attack on the United Provinces, to send them an auxiliary force of 12,000 men, and the States-General, in return, were to place at his disposal 6,000 men if required. On both sides the military contingent might be replaced by a subsidy in money fixed at 10,000 francs a month for every thousand soldiers. Moreover, the two States guaranteed to each other all their possessions, including in this reciprocal guarantee the free right of fishing. Finally, the duty of a crown per ton, which had given rise to so many disputes, was no longer to be demanded from the subjects of the United Provinces, except on their merchandise exported from France, and was, moreover, to be reduced to half a crown for vessels employed in the transport of salt, which constituted their chief

export trade. The duration of the alliance was extended to twenty-five years.

The States-General learned with satisfaction the conclusion of the treaty of Paris. The Grand Pensionary's cousin, Cornelius Ascanius van Sypestein, who was attached to the embassy of the United Provinces in Paris, acted as messenger to bring to the Hague the copy signed by the King of France, and was rewarded with a gold medal for the rapidity with which he had performed the journey in three days. 'We are happy to learn,' writes De Witt to Van Beuningen, 'that at last the troubles of this long negotiation are crowned with better success than could have been hoped. This close alliance, and the advantages of the conventions relative to trade, wipe out the wrongs which so many delays had done to the credit of the State in protracting the settlement of affairs.'

These expectations were in danger of being disappointed by fresh procrastination. Charles II., obliged to provide for the insufficiency of his financial resources, had sold Dunkirk to the King of France for the sum of five millions. Louis XIV., by retarding the ratification of the treaty, hoped to obtain from the States the territorial guarantee therein stipulated, not only for this fresh acquisition, but also for Lorraine, which Duke Charles IV., ignoring the right of succession claimed by his nephew, had just ceded to him. The States-General took alarm at these pretensions and refused to submit to them. Mutual concessions put an end to the dispute, which had lasted a whole year. Louis gave up the guarantee of Lorraine, and the States-General accorded to him that of Dunkirk, obtaining on their part a guarantee from France of the treaty which they had just concluded with England. To testify to the States his friendly intentions, Louis consented to the ratification, till now deferred, of the treaty, without insisting that the Act of Guarantee of Dunkirk should be previously delivered to him. 'I thought,' he writes to his ambassador at the Hague, 'that there would be no imprudence on my part in trusting the word of so honourable a man as the Sieur de Witt, as you will be careful to assure him.'

The interests of France were even more deeply engaged than those of the United Provinces in a conciliatory and considerate policy. For a long time past French policy had coveted the Spanish Netherlands, bordering upon the territory of the republic, the possession of which would enable France to extend her northern frontiers, which were too close to the capital. Richelieu had proposed to form the Netherlands into a Catholic republic, of which France could easily have secured the direction. Mazarin had at first other ideas in his mind. Meditating the annexation of these provinces to the French monarchy, he had sought to profit by the negotiations for the treaty of Westphalia, in order to acquire the Netherlands and Franche-Comté in exchange for Catalonia, of which France was then in possession. These proposals having led to nothing, he recognised the necessity for coming to terms with the republic of the United Provinces; and although disappointed by the peace of Münster which the latter had concluded with Spain, he did not despair of interesting her in the execution of the plan conceived by Richelieu. The project of forming the Netherlands into an independent republic, called in the despatches of that time the Cantonment, became henceforth the aim of his negotiations, and he flattered himself that he would easily obtain the consent of the States-General.

De Witt gave his entire adhesion to this policy, which appeared to him to be favourable to the interests of the United Provinces. He entered upon the matter with the principal deputies of the States of Holland and overcame the opposition of some of the magistrates of Amsterdam, who were in favour of an alliance between Spain and the republic, through the good offices of his uncle Cornelius de Graeff de Zuidpolsbroeck, who had great influence in the town council. To prevent the annexation of the Low Countries he was willing to consent to and to encourage their cantonment. He had adopted as his device the old saying, 'Gallum amicum, non vicinum'—the alliance, not the vicinity of France. Believing that Spain, weakened and exhausted, would be unable to defend against French conquest these provinces now isolated

and left to themselves, fearing besides that she would not desire to keep them and might return to the proposal already entered into with France of an exchange, he sought security for the United Provinces in the freedom and independence of the Netherlands; he desired to take them from Spain, but not to give them to France, hoping to bind them to the United Provinces by the ties of a confederation which might easily be established between the two republics. 'The cantonment of the Netherlands,' he said at a later period to the French ambassador, 'would have given repose and security to both.' To hasten the fulfilment of these projects, he went so far as to urge the French Government to send an army against the principal towns of Flanders, in order to force them, as he said, 'to take up arms for their liberty.' It was the Belgium of to-day that he proposed, so far back as the seventeenth century, should be added to the number of the States of Europe, in his statesmanlike forethought thus anticipating by nearly two centuries the work of modern policy.

The fresh pretensions of France were about to imperil once more the agreement which had apparently been secured. The marriage of Louis XIV. with the Infanta Maria Theresa, which was the result of the peace of the Pyrenees, threatened the United Provinces with unexpected dangers, and was preparing for Europe more than half a century of wars vainly interrupted by treaties. Maria Theresa had, it is true, renounced the crown of Spain, and Louis XIV. had ratified the renunciation in consideration of the promise of a dowry of 500,000 gold crowns. But scarcely was his marriage concluded when he sought to evade this engagement. He was the more interested in withdrawing from it that the only heir of Philip IV. king of Spain was a sickly child who did not appear likely to survive his father. Louis would not admit that any treaty could set aside the ancient and fundamental law of the Spanish monarchy which allowed females the right of succession to the throne; moreover, the dowry not having been paid, he considered the renunciation as void, and was determined henceforth to preserve intact the rights of the queen, his wife, over the whole of her paternal inheritance.

He was preparing at the same time to invoke other titles of inheritance which should enable him, on the death of Philip IV., to establish his claim to the greater part of the Netherlands and thus to dismember the Spanish monarchy without waiting till the succession became vacant. According to a custom of Brabant which was followed in some of the provinces of the Netherlands, the patrimonial possessions belonged to children born of a first marriage. A second marriage transmitted the inheritance to them, and the father who had married again only retained the revenue of his property. It was this purely local law of civil right, called Law of Devolution, which Louis XIV. wished to invoke for his own benefit. The Infanta of Spain, Maria Theresa, now queen of France, was the only daughter of Philip IV. by his first wife, Elizabeth of France. Louis XIV. asserted that the King of Spain, in contracting a second marriage with Maria Anna of Austria, had no longer a right to more than the revenue of that part of the Low Countries which was governed by the Law of Devolution; he therefore claimed the right of possession in behalf of the Infanta Maria Theresa, his wife. This claim appeared to have small foundation. It was abrogated by the Act of Renunciation, which annulled all rights of succession, whatever they might be. Besides, it only rested on a custom purely applicable to private rights, and foreign to political rights. Finally, it was difficult to admit that a monarchy could be deprived of some of its provinces in virtue of a right of succession contrary to the fundamental laws of that monarchy, so far as they regulated the transmission of the royal authority.

De Witt had been informed of the dispositions of the King of France while Van Beuningen was negotiating with him the treaty of alliance which had just been concluded. The acquisition of Dunkirk by Louis XIV., by giving him an advanced post towards the conquest of the Low Countries, confirmed the projects attributed to him. The Grand Pensionary of Holland could not fail to be alarmed at them. In the hope of inducing the French Government to renounce its ambitious designs, he pretended to desire an alliance between

the United Provinces and Spain, and despatched to Madrid, as ambassadors extraordinary, three envoys from the States-General. On the other hand, far from rejecting the advances of Louis, he determined to encourage them. Without renouncing the idea of cantonnement of the Netherlands, he appeared disposed to accede to a partition of those provinces between France and the republic, if a partition was necessary in order to avoid annexation. By appearing thus to approach nearer to the views of the King of France, he hoped to gain time and thus to succeed in obtaining concessions. This policy of subterfuge and evasion which concealed so many dangers was about to show conspicuously the Grand Pensionary's prudence and suppleness of mind and to give proof of his diplomatic experience. Louis XIV., whose interest it was not to be too hasty in the execution of his designs, desired, on his side, to continue the course of negotiations and to secure in case of necessity an agreement with the United Provinces. Thus, making choice of a new ambassador whom he thought likely to receive the most cordial welcome at the Hague, he replaced De Thou by Count d'Estrades. De Thou was in ill odour with the French Government in consequence of the secret despatches of Wicquefort, whom Lionne employed as one of his regular correspondents. The haughty arrogance that he displayed in his last communications with the deputies of the States served as a pretext for hastening his recall. D'Estrades, on the contrary, enjoyed the entire confidence of his sovereign, and was likely to find no difficulty in insinuating himself into that of the States. He joined to his high reputation as a diplomatist the military renown which he had acquired in attaining successively to the ranks of major-general and lieutenant-general. Appointed mayor of Bordeaux for life as a reward for the services which he had rendered in Guyenne during the Fronde, he had been sent as ambassador to London after the recall of Charles II., and had just induced the King of England to sell the town of Dunkirk to the King of France, who held him in high honour in consequence of the success of this negotiation. Moreover, Count d'Estrades was not looked upon as a stranger

when he arrived at the Hague. He had served his first campaign in the war of the United Provinces against Spain, under the orders of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, who had rewarded his courage by giving him the rank of colonel. Employed at a later period, before the peace of the Pyrenees, in negotiating an agreement with the States-General for the purpose of attempting, though unsuccessfully, to engage them, together with Cromwell, in a fresh naval war against Spain, he had contrived to open useful relations in the United Provinces, which, joined to his profound acquaintance with the institutions of the country, contributed to the success of his embassy.

The closest intimacy was speedily established between the French ambassador and the Grand Pensionary of Holland. D'Estrades, who hoped to gain by his liberality the good offices of the principal deputies, and who induced Beverningh to accept in default of a pension the portrait of the king surrounded with precious stones, was at first disconcerted by the disinterestedness of John de Witt. Obligated to acknowledge, as Turenne had warned him, the uselessness of offers 'against which the Grand Pensionary prided himself on exercising his virtue,' he writes to Louis XIV.: 'As for this man, he is incorruptible; he only wishes for esteem and kindness on your Majesty's part.' Not only did De Witt oppose to all attempts at bribery his own impenetrable integrity, but he also determined to baffle them by exacting from the deputies an oath to take no pay or salary from any foreign sovereign.

Far from allowing himself to be gained over by D'Estrades, De Witt won the latter by his manners and behaviour. He gratified his vanity in the first instance by courteously refraining from exacting that the first visit should be paid by him, though D'Estrades would not allow himself to be excused from it. He was careful at the same time to consider his interests by obtaining from the States of Holland the payment of the arrears which had been due to him for twelve years as colonel of one of their regiments, thus procuring for him a donation of 25,000 francs. The Grand Pensionary at the

same time renewed his declarations of zeal and devotion towards the King of France. 'The saying of your Excellency in the speech made at your reception, that his Majesty wished to imitate Henry the Great and had the same friendship and affection for this state as that great prince,' he writes in the first letter he addressed to him, 'gives me an opportunity of saying that we hope his Majesty will be a father to us as he was, and will bear with our shortcomings, oftener caused by the constitution of our republic than by lack of good-will.' D'Estrades allowed himself to be easily persuaded, and went so far as to bear testimony to the Grand Pensionary. 'I could not myself,' he declared to Louis XIV., 'be more zealous for the greatness and prosperity of your Majesty than M. de Witt appears to be.' The King of France, on his side, did not stint his praises. 'You may place the direction of my affairs,' he writes to D'Estrades, 'in such good hands as his, and leave the entire conduct of them to his zeal and experience. It is plain that God created him for great things, and I think myself that the acquisition of so good a friend was not a mere work of chance, but of the Divine Providence, which disposes early the instruments which it intends to employ for the glory of this crown as well as for the advantage and the safety of the United Provinces.'

Assured of the confidence of the French ambassador, De Witt sought to avail himself of it to discover the designs of Louis XIV. With this view he undertook to set aside the proposals made to him by the Spanish ambassador, Gamarra, of bringing about a defensive alliance between the United Provinces and the Spanish Netherlands. But he demanded in return that the French Government should declare in favour of the enfranchisement of the Netherlands, thereby obliging it to renounce the ideas of annexation which Louis had not yet ventured to make known.

Determined to prevent any delay, he repaired to Count d'Estrades to announce to him that two Flemish deputies had come to demand on the part of the six principal towns of the Netherlands the assistance of Holland for the purpose of promoting an insurrection destined to deliver them from

Spanish domination. Unable to evade the promise of co-operation that was asked of him, D'Estrades allowed himself to be disconcerted. He answered that 'the States would find it more to their advantage to take steps which would enable them to ensure their well-being in future, without prejudice to the rights of the King of France over Flanders.' He thus indirectly made the first overtures towards the partition.

De Witt took advantage of the admission made by the French ambassador to request him to make known the rights to which Louis XIV. laid claim. The ambassador referred to those of the queen, Maria Theresa, alleging that no renunciation could hold good against them, since the dowry which she was to have received had not been paid. De Witt thus found himself in possession of the secret which he was anxious to discover; but he promised not to allow it to be suspected until the king should have made known his answer.

Louis, on receiving his ambassador's despatch, readily perceived the fault which D'Estrades had committed, and attempted to repair it. To cut short the projects for a union between the United Provinces and the Spanish Netherlands, he determined to encourage the proposals made by the Grand Pensionary. De Witt's fears were not, however, allayed, though he concealed them. He could not be satisfied without an undertaking on the part of Louis that he would desist from his pretensions, and he intended to leave no stone unturned to obtain it.

Impatient to attain in this manner the end of his policy, he offered the King of France an agreement by which Louis, as the price of his co-operation in the enfranchisement of the Netherlands, should annex those of their frontier towns which were contiguous to his kingdom, on the condition of leaving to the United Provinces those which were nearest to their territory. D'Estrades, far from accepting this proposal with eagerness, affected a disinterestedness of which the Grand Pensionary did not allow himself to be the dupe. To force him to lay aside his reserve, De Witt put forward resolutely the plan of partition, but without any desire to bring it to a conclusion. In answer to the invitation which he skil-

fully caused to be addressed to him, he drew up a long and remarkable report, in which, without renouncing the cantonment, he offered the King of France the co-operation of the States to put him in possession of the Netherlands after the death of the King of Spain and that of the Infant. This assistance was to be given on condition of obtaining in return for the United Provinces that part of the Netherlands which extends as far as Ostend. He thus postponed and limited, to the great advantage of the States-General, the claims of the King of France. By persuading Louis to await not only the death of Philip IV. but also that of the Infant, before claiming the inheritance of Maria Theresa, he obliged him to renounce the Law of Devolution.

Louis XIV., who wished to give his policy an appearance of moderation, in order to encourage De Witt to continue the negotiations, accepted with apparent satisfaction the plan of the Grand Pensionary. To maintain his confidence, the latter appointed a secret meeting with those deputies of the States of Holland with whom he was most closely united; he called them together at Ilpendam, in the country house situated at the gates of Utrecht which belonged to his uncle De Graeff de Zuidpolsbroeck, and boasted to the French ambassador that he had forced them to perceive the necessity for a speedy agreement. De Witt by these means obtained from Louis an injunction to D'Estrades 'to permit him to conduct the affair at his pleasure,' and obtained the full powers which he desired.

De Witt, however, only intended to make use of them for the purpose of forcing the King of France to explain himself, not doubting that Louis XIV. had some concealed intentions which would soon come to light. He therefore brought forward, as if against his will, unexpected objections to the project of a partition. He alleged more especially the insurmountable resistance of the deputies of Amsterdam, who feared that if Antwerp were once annexed by the States-General the free navigation of the Scheldt, which Spain had been obliged by the peace of Münster to renounce, would be restored and might cause the inevitable ruin of their commerce. He therefore undertook, with apparent reluctance, to

persuade D'Estrades that he would be obliged not only to be satisfied with the cantonment of the Netherlands, but perhaps to renounce even that, 'if he could not make his friends more tractable by enlightening them as to the rights which the King of France might be disposed to claim.'

Louis, persuaded by D'Estrades that there was no artifice concealed in this, did not think himself entitled to refuse the appeal. He determined to make known the motives which might induce him to declare the nullity of the renunciation of the queen to the inheritance of the King of Spain, letting it be understood at the same time that, if the republic would acknowledge his rights to the succession, he would refrain from putting them forward for the annexation of the Netherlands.

The Grand Pensionary awaited with impatience this declaration and seized upon it with his habitual dexterity. He began by secretly urging the King of Spain to pay Maria Theresa's dowry, in order not to leave the King of France the pretext that Louis XIV. brought forward for considering the renunciation of the Infanta as null and void; but he could not prevail on the Court of Madrid to follow his advice. He also attempted to take advantage of the communications of the King of France, who had hitherto asserted no claim to the Netherlands except those of succession to the whole Spanish monarchy, in order to prevent him from making any attempt on these provinces, so long as the death of Philip IV. and that of the Infant had not left vacant the succession to which Louis pretended. Fearing that he might find himself irrevocably engaged, the King of France was forced to unveil his ambitious designs, and, without hesitating to disavow his latest declarations, he asserted that the death of Philip IV. alone would give him a right to claim the Netherlands, thus appealing to the Law of Devolution.

Now that he was undeceived as to the apparent concessions of the King of France, De Witt, who was clear-sighted and did not allow himself to be easily led, tried to influence the resolutions of Louis XIV. by leading him to fear that the proposals for a confederation between the United Provinces and

the Netherlands might be favourably received at the Hague; they were, in fact, eagerly renewed by the Spanish ambassador, Gamarra, who had remained for seven hours in conference with the commissioners of the States. But the Grand Pensionary soon perceived that the King of France was more offended than alarmed at this attempt at intimidation. 'I do not choose,' he wrote haughtily to D'Estrades, 'that the Sieur de Witt should lead me into everything he chooses and when he chooses by the terrors of this league. My affairs have not yet arrived at that point.' 'Such threats,' he added royally in another despatch, 'rouse my spirit, and if I chose to give you a precise answer, I could not perhaps refrain from ordering you to say things to him which would not be agreeable to hear. He may easily by his proceedings give rise to thoughts which are not now in my mind, and engage his superiors in a disagreeable business by his too great desire to serve them better.'

De Witt now perceived, with his usual prudence, the necessity for a compromise. Although he had handed to D'Estrades another memorandum intended to demonstrate by historical examples going back as far as Charlemagne that the Law of Devolution rested on no foundation as regarded the succession to the Duchy of Brabant, he would not persist in disputing it, provided he could succeed in preventing, even by means of a partition, the annexation of the Netherlands to France. In a conference to which he summoned the principal deputies, amongst others those of Amsterdam, who were the most refractory, he set forth, with the powers of persuasion natural to him, all the motives calculated to dissuade the United Provinces from breaking with France by means of an alliance with Spain. In order to convince them finally, he expressed his opinion to the States in a long report written by himself, which showed his statesmanlike penetration. After comparing the weakness of Spain to the growing strength of France, which could not fail to encourage Louis XIV. in claiming the succession to the Spanish monarchy, he considered how the Netherlands might be placed beyond his reach. On the one hand he showed the necessity for a league

to protect the cantonment of those provinces in the event of their wishing to form themselves into an independent republic, and on the other hand he pointed out its dangers, Spain not choosing to allow them to be taken from her, and France being doubtless disposed to consider the league as a provocation. The proposal of leaving the Netherlands to Spain appeared to him no less difficult or dangerous, and he drew attention to the weakness of the allies to whom the republic might appeal. He considered the German Princes and the Kings of Denmark and Sweden as too dependent upon France for anything to be expected from their aid. He represented in striking terms 'the empire as a skeleton, of which the different parts were kept together, not by nerves, but by a brass wire, and which had thus no natural movement;' Spain 'as a broken reed which could only be defended by engaging in a war of which the republic would be obliged to sustain nearly all the expenses.' 'The Netherlands,' he added, 'were open to France by the fortresses which Louis XIV. had conquered, and appeared, moreover, more inclined to become French than to remain Spanish. There was, therefore, no guarantee against their annexation to France except a speedy treaty. According to his proposals, the States were to leave Louis entire liberty to put forward the claims of the Queen of France to the Netherlands immediately on the death of the King of Spain; but they were only to undertake to give him their support when the succession was actually open—that is to say, after the death of Philip IV. and that of the Infant—and with the reservation that at one period or the other the United Provinces should be put in possession of the fortresses contiguous to their territory. 'It is better,' said De Witt in conclusion, 'to share with France than to attempt fruitlessly to dispute the enjoyment of his rights with a powerful king who is our ally.'

The deputies of the States allowed themselves to be convinced by these considerations. But encouraged secretly by the Grand Pensionary, and not wishing to remain exposed to the inconsistencies of French policy, they declared that they would not consent to the proposals for a new treaty unless

D'Estrades undertook to obtain its approval from the King of France without any alteration.

Unable now to find any further subterfuge, Louis XIV. refused definitely to pledge himself, and De Lionne, who had dissuaded him from making any concession, wrote haughtily to D'Estrades: 'The real design of his Majesty is to remain free, without digging for himself ditches which would prevent him from walking straightforward and with ease, according to what he may consider conducive to his glory, his advantage, and the greater welfare of his country.' The King of France, notwithstanding, thought himself under the necessity of conciliating the good-will of the Grand Pensionary. Foreseeing the suspicions which De Witt would not fail to spread if he refused to continue the negotiations that had been entered upon, he authorised his ambassador to assure the first minister of Holland 'that he would never make any attempt upon the Netherlands otherwise than justly and with the participation of his allies.'

This was the only satisfaction that the Grand Pensionary could obtain; it left, at any rate, the future open. By remaining loyal to the alliance with France, he hoped to be enabled to impose on Louis XIV. the necessity for concessions, and to prevent him from precipitating the execution of his plans. Moreover, having discovered his designs, without, it is true, being able to alter them, De Witt hoped to be able to take timely steps to arrest or restrain his ambition. In spite of the uneasiness still felt by the United Provinces, the chief danger he had feared, and which he had pointed out some years before in a confidential letter, viz. the diplomatic isolation of the republic, was now at an end. The two treaties that had been successively concluded with England and France, in leaving to the States-General a free choice of alliances, seemed to be a lasting pledge of external security. The medal which commemorated them bore for its inscription this line of Virgil: 'Deus nobis hæc otia fecit,' and on the reverse were these words: 'Peace, crowned with olives, unites the United Provinces to France as well as to Great Britain, and this union renders the State prosperous.'

The persistent policy of the Grand Pensionary had also accomplished successfully the work of internal pacification. He had sought to secure this by the union of Holland with Zealand. In order to promote the success of the negotiations entered into between the two provinces, De Witt had secured the consent of the pensionary of Zealand, Adrian Veth, who had occupied that post for the last four years, and had acquired preponderating authority in the Assembly of the States of that province. He had subdued and intimidated him by the lofty and somewhat arrogant firmness he displayed towards him, if one may judge by the letter in which he reproached him with not having kept his first promises. 'My sentiments are such,' he wrote, 'that if I intended to do something that I judged necessary to my honour, I would not assert to anyone that I would do the contrary; if I had once promised anyone that I would do anything, and if later I found myself obliged to alter my conduct, I should not hesitate a moment in acquainting him with it. If I had acted on my part in such a manner towards you, you would have reason to say that it had been a breach of faith; but this is entirely contrary to my custom, and if such a manner of acting is in accordance with yours, I do not know whether the old proverb, "True man, good Zealander," could be justly applied to you.' De Witt had, on the other hand, adroitly paid him every attention that could gain him over to the interests of Holland, and had used his influence on behalf of one of his brothers who was threatened with being excluded from the provincial court. Having earned his gratitude, he made him his ally.

The agreement between the two provinces was now concluded without difficulty. The States of Holland, to please the States of Zealand, settled in their favour the legal differences raised by the organisation of the court of justice common to the two provinces; they promised, besides, to renounce in their favour a certain number of offices which depended on the selection of the Prince of Orange, and of which they would have the disposal if they took him again under their guardianship. In return for these concessions, the States of

Zealand engaged not only not to elect a stadtholder without a preliminary agreement with Holland, but also not to demand of the States-General the restoration of the son of William II. to any of the offices of his ancestors before he had completed his eighteenth year. The Princess Dowager vainly opposed this compromise. According to a contemporary author, she openly declared that 'the Act of Exclusion of the Prince of Orange, passed ten years before by Holland and Cromwell combined, had not been more fatal to the interests of her grandson.' By the loss of the support of Zealand the Orange party seemed reduced to capitulation. 'I should have been glad to be of use to the young prince,' writes D'Estrades; 'but I now see clearly that for a long time to come his will be a fallen house.'

A year later the ambassador of the King of France showed publicly, by his behaviour towards the last descendant of the stadtholders, that he did not consider him as the inheritor of their authority. He seized the pretext of another dispute about etiquette to refuse to pay him any marks of respect. Their two carriages finding themselves side by side in the promenade of the Hague, the Voorhout, which was enclosed by barriers for carriage traffic, the prince wished to take the place of honour on the right hand, the nearest to the barrier; D'Estrades' coachman, attempting the same manœuvre, barred his passage. Neither would yield, and the dispute almost gave rise to a tumult. The people whom the fair at the Hague had collected in the streets of the town were crowding round the carriages and beginning with violence to take the prince's part, while D'Estrades was sending orders to all his followers to come to his assistance. The Grand Pensionary of Holland, informed of the danger, hastened to the spot with some of the deputies of the States, and, in deference to the remonstrances of the ambassador, sent for the Princess Dowager, who prevailed on her grandson to leave his carriage under pretence of joining her. To satisfy the King of France and prevent the renewal of a similar dispute, the States of Holland hastened to issue an order which obliged all their subjects, without any exception, to take in future the left hand in the promenade

of the Hague. The pretensions of the Prince of Orange had thus only brought upon him fresh humiliation.

Impatient to enjoy their supremacy at their leisure, the States of Holland determined to have it officially recognised, by ordering an alteration to be made in the public prayers, as recited in their province. They proposed to modify them in such a manner as not to allow any precedence to the States-General. Many pamphlets had been published for and against the revision of the liturgy. The one which made most impression was the work of the Grand Pensionary's cousin, also called John de Wit,¹ who had pronounced in favour of the new liturgy with the authority derived from his relationship. The Grand Pensionary had not encouraged him in thus taking the initiative, having no inclination for such innovations. 'It was forced on him,' wrote the French ambassador, 'by his friends, who sometimes obliged him to speak against his own opinion, and to make concessions, without which he could not have retained his power.' After the discussions had been prolonged for three weeks, the States of Holland enjoined on all ministers of religion who were their subjects to offer prayers first for the States of the province, their sole and legitimate sovereigns; then, for the States of the other provinces, their allies, and for the deputies who represented them in the Assembly of the Confederation. The States-General, who personified, so to say, the union and sovereignty of the United Provinces, were thus deposed from the rank which they claimed, and which had hitherto legally appertained to them; since they decided all questions of peace and war, the conclusion of treaties, and even the maintenance of religion. Their supremacy was nevertheless questionable, since their resolutions might have to be submitted for the consent of the other provinces. Under the appearance of a fresh quarrel, the old struggle was being kept up which the States of Holland had entered into with the federal power, whose superior authority they refused to acknowledge.

The other provinces, who could not escape from their sub-

¹ His family name, De Wit, was written with only one *t*.

jection to the States of Holland except by opposing to them the authority of the States-General, hastened to respond to the appeal of the States of Friesland who protested against this usurpation of power. The States of Holland paid no heed to their remonstrances, and, to dissuade them from a useless resistance, sent them a carefully studied message drawn up by John de Witt with the assistance of one of the pastors of Dordrecht, Jacob Lydius. In this manifesto, which won for him the most flattering commendation from the King of France, the Grand Pensionary explained to the other provinces that Holland was only making a regulation for the use of her own inhabitants, and to reassure them as to the import of the new form of prayer, he represented to them that they kept intact the right of acting as they pleased for the maintenance or revision of the ancient liturgy. The precautions which he caused to be taken that these political discussions should not degenerate into theological controversy, and to prevent the Calvinistic clergy from taking part in them, removed all pretext for religious passion and ensured the easy execution of the orders given by the States.

Accustomed to consider no measures of precaution as superfluous, the Grand Pensionary of Holland was careful to maintain confidence and union in the Assembly of the province. With this view he caused an Act to be passed, known under the name of the Act of Indemnity, which was intended to guarantee protection and reparation to ministers and deputies who might suffer any loss in the service of Holland, as well as to their widows and children. On the other hand, he gave satisfaction to the nobles, by obtaining for them the grant of certain prerogatives of judicial authority in their own domains. He interposed with equal solicitude to conciliate the rival pretensions of the towns, which were disputing for the right of being represented by their deputies on the various boards of the Confederation. The necessity for ensuring to the republic the means requisite for the common defence appeared to him no less imperative, and at his suggestion the States-General determined to compel those provinces who did not pay their subsidies to discharge their debt, even by

force, if necessary. No success was wanting to his policy when he had obtained the appointment as secretary of the Federal Council of the State of Govert van Slingelandt, who had distinguished himself by the success of his negotiations in Denmark and Sweden during the war in the North; this appointment was, in fact, a fresh guarantee of the supremacy of the States of Holland, who possessed another most faithful ally in Ruysch, the secretary of the States-General. Ruysch, De Witt, and Slingelandt, who had each in turn been pensionaries of Dordrecht, occupied henceforth the three most important posts in the republic, and their triumvirate made the States of Holland masters of the government of the Confederation. Prince William Frederick of Nassau, who alone might have disputed this domination, only sought their good graces and placed himself at their service.

Assured of the gratitude of his masters, the States, De Witt was able to regard the past with complacency and to look forward confidently to the future. 'Never,' writes a contemporary, 'have the States testified so much friendliness and satisfaction towards their Grand Pensionary as they did at their last adjournment, when the nobles and towns thanked him with extraordinary affection, so that whereas, formerly, there were towns which still spoke on behalf of the interests of the Prince of Orange, there is not one that does not speak to-day of the sovereignty and liberty of the province of Holland.'

He had just received the reward of his services in his reelection as Grand Pensionary, in July 1663, this being the second time that he had obtained the renewal of his commission. Six weeks later, having asked and received the authorisation of the Council of Dordrecht, John de Witt resumed the exercise of his ministry for another period of five years. The States hastened to grant him a fresh guarantee of indemnity and confirmed their promise of reserving for him, on the expiration of his functions, a seat in one of the courts of justice of the province, 'to which he looked as a safe and honourable retreat.' He had already, three years before, joined to his office that of superintendent or president of the Court of Fiefs

and keeper of the Great Seal, which had long been in the possession of the former Grand Pensionary, Cats, who had retained the emoluments, amounting to 3,000 florins, up to the time of his death. As it was necessary, in order to become superintendent of fiefs, to prove that he possessed landed property, De Witt made use of his wife's dowry to purchase four estates or lordships in the province of Holland, and thus obtained investiture of his new office.

The powers which he exercised had been of service to his family. In the year following his first appointment as Grand Pensionary, the post of *Ruard* or bailiff of Putten, one of the most important in the province, from the extent of the prerogatives that it carried with it, had been bestowed on his brother, Cornelius, sheriff of Dordrecht. Three years later, he obtained for his father, Jacob de Witt, the post of auditor-general for Holland. Unable himself to interpose on his behalf, he encouraged him to solicit the votes of the members of the States, pointed out to him with the most minute care those who he thought deserved his confidence, pressed him to write to them, or to call upon them, and thus traced out for him a complete programme of parliamentary canvassing.

De Witt, though disinterested on his own account, was anxious to be of use to his family. He hoped that his own authority might be strengthened by the satisfaction given them. Still, in spite of the reproaches which he may have incurred of being too well disposed to serve the interests of his relations and friends, the complaints of those whose demands he had been unable to comply with are an irrefutable proof of the limits he imposed upon himself. Thus his cousin, John de Sypesteyn, who solicited the command of a regiment, reproached him with 'showing too much timidity, and not giving himself trouble enough.' In his correspondence with his father, De Witt referred to the unjust accusations of nepotism that had been made against him and represented that, if he had incurred them, 'it was because some of his near relations and connections had been promoted to offices into which, however, they had not been thrust by force, but to which they attained with great ease, either through the support of other

friends, or else in consideration of their personal qualities and of their capability.'

However that may be, De Witt appeared necessarily the more accessible to considerations of relationship from the fact that he was on the most intimate terms with all the members of his family. Thus he repaired to Dordrecht to take part in the festivities on the occasion of the marriage of one of his nieces, the daughter of his eldest sister, Alide Beveren de Zwyndrecht, who had married Pompey de Meerdervoort. He continued to reside frequently with his wife at the country house of his uncle, Van Sypesteyn; he thanks him for his presents, and, in the formal style of the day, 'for the terrier dogs,' of which he had always been as great a lover as himself, and consults him with regard to buying a property in his neighbourhood. He kept up a constant correspondence with his brother Cornelius, and, having himself as yet no son, congratulated him on the birth of a second boy. 'I was happy to hear,' he says, 'that the addition you have got this time is of the favourable sex, by which the lack in our family will be supplied in a worthy manner.' His eldest sister, Johanna Beveren van Zwyndrecht, who had managed his establishment before his marriage, still continued to do so and employed herself with maternal solicitude in the selection of a nurse for his first child.

The death of his mother-in-law, whom he had lost shortly after his marriage, had not disturbed the close union which existed between John de Witt and his wife's family. 'I spent the season of Christmas,' he wrote, 'at Amsterdam, where I was more occupied in devotions and family meetings than in business.' He displayed sincere affection towards his two young sisters-in-law, who were not yet married, and often invited them to visit his wife. They were very fond of the pleasures suited to their age, if we may judge by the following letter which they wrote to De Witt: 'We cannot start for the Hague just yet, for we have a great deal to do while staying with our eldest sister Trip, and, first of all, to go to the fair of Amsterdam, which we have never missed; for you know that we like very much to be wherever there is anything

amusing going on.' One of them, Cornelia, married her paternal first cousin, Gerard Bicker van Swieten, son of Cornelius Bicker, who inherited his father's great possessions, and who had such habits of luxury that he drove in Amsterdam in a carriage and four. The other, the younger and prettier, Jacoba Bicker, married her maternal first cousin, De Graeff, son of Cornelius, lord of Zuidpolsbroeck. On the occasion of her marriage, John de Witt addressed a compliment in verse to each of the guests, thanking them for their kind reception of him and eulogising the young couple.

His wife's uncles were loyal advisers of the Grand Pensionary: they placed at the service of his policy the authority appertaining to them in the Council of Amsterdam, and De Witt never failed to consult them or to ask their co-operation in the direction of internal affairs or the conduct of the most important negotiations. Andrew de Graeff, burgomaster of the town, was re-elected seven times, and always showed himself worthy of the confidence of his fellow-citizens. Cornelius de Graeff, lord of Zuidpolsbroeck, the eldest of the family, a deputy councillor of Holland, who had been associated with John De Witt on several missions, had acquired the most varied information, joined to a profound knowledge of business. 'He may be described,' writes a contemporary to Cromwell's minister, Thurloe, 'as a man of whom Aristotle himself might learn the politics, being as much Orange party as good Hollander in making a *Misce, fiat potio*, whereof men do believe that he will give to drink to the said great pensionary.' De Graeff had earned the confidence of the republican party by bringing about the agreement between the town of Amsterdam and William II. after the coup d'état attempted by the last stadtholder; on the other hand, after the death of William II., he won the gratitude of his widow, the Princess Royal, by the friendly feelings which he displayed on the occasion of the domestic discords to which the guardianship of the young prince gave rise. Of the two sons of Cornelius de Graeff, Jacob and Peter, the youngest, Peter, who married the sister-in-law of the Grand Pensionary, Jacoba Bicker, was always united to him in the closest friendship,

and justified his confidence in the day of his disgrace and misfortunes.

The joys of paternity had completed the happiness of John de Witt's married life. His wife had already borne him three daughters, of whom the eldest, Anna, endowed with a precocious intellect, was always the object of her father's predilection. His wishes were fulfilled by the long hoped-for birth of a son, called John after his father. His uncle, Van Sypesteyn, who lived to the age of sixty-nine, congratulates him on the occasion with touching warmth: 'My dear nephew,' he writes, 'I cannot express with my pen how much the happy delivery of your beloved one has rejoiced my wife and myself: you would not believe it, though my tears of joy might be sufficient proof. I wish you, as well as the charming invalid, much happiness with your first-born son, praying you both, however, only to consider this charming doll as such, and not as an idol, as some parents do; for God does not wish us to make too much of His merciful gifts, and experience teaches us that such a course does not bring happiness on those who act thus. I end by wishing you both, as well as your new-born son, all sorts of happiness and blessings.'

Public affairs and domestic joys had not detached him from the studious tastes of his youth. Philosophy continued to find in him a faithful disciple. His correspondence with the pastor Andrew Colvins, one of his early instructors, shows the interest he took in the publication of Descartes' manuscripts. His favourite study was mathematics and in one of his letters he expresses the satisfaction which he had experienced from reading a treatise on the Differential and Integral Calculus; he congratulated Huyghens, with whom he liked to correspond, on the experiments which he had made at sea with some chronometers intended for long voyages, and suggested to him that he should demand a patent for them from the States-General. He worked out the most varied problems as a recreation, and applied his scientific calculations to useful objects. It was thus that he dis-

covered a means for reducing the number of weights used for different commercial purposes, and was the inventor of the chain shot which did such important service to the Dutch navy.

He had even published in Latin, under the title of 'Elements of Curved Lines,' a treatise he had no doubt commenced during the studious years of his youth, and which soon acquired a well-earned reputation. Francis van Schoten, professor of mathematics at the University of Leyden, with whose father he had resided during his stay at the university, published it, with several other scientific works, as a sequel to Descartes' 'Geometry,' edited by him. De Witt corrected the press with scrupulous exactness, profiting by the observations of the celebrated mathematician, Christian Huyghens, and by the assistance of Van Schoten, who revised the manuscript which was dedicated to him. He had divided his work into two parts.

In the first, which is a treatise on pure geometry, he treats of the parabola, the ellipse and the hyperbola, and shows, by an original and ingenious process, how these curves may be derived.

He deduces clearly the principal characteristic properties of each, points out the different methods by which each may be investigated, and proves their common origin from their common properties.

The second part, which is a treatise on analytical geometry, explains the method of determining the positions of geometrical points in a plane or in space. The author shows how the properties of a curve may be deduced from its equation, demonstrating that a simple equation represents a straight line and a quadratic a curved line, viz., a circle, a parabola, an ellipse or a hyperbola.

In a concluding chapter he investigates the general method for constructing, in a plane or in space, the figures which are represented by these equations.

But politics did not allow him to devote much time to science. He gave up to them even the little leisure left to

him by the exercise of his functions; and in order to defend, not only by words, but also with his pen, the government which he indefatigably served, he came forward as a public writer. His contribution to the work of Pierre Delacourt, entitled 'The Interests of Holland,' which has often exercised the sagacity of the bibliographical critic, gives positive proof of his opinions. Delacourt,¹ who was devoted to the republican party, to which, in spite of the trials of ill-fortune, he remained loyal till his death, had early developed a taste for examining into public affairs. At the age of twenty-three he had written, for the benefit of his native town, a pamphlet which was never published, entitled 'The Prosperity of the Town of Leyden.' Three years later he incorporated it in a more fully developed treatise, called 'The Interests of Holland.'

The fame of this book extended beyond the limits of the United Provinces. 'If you can find a volume entitled "The Interests of Holland," in which they say all the secrets of trade are contained,' wrote De Lionne to D'Estrades, 'you will oblige me by sending me a copy, and M. Colbert still more by sending him another.' This curiosity was justified by the importance of this study of political economy. The work was instructive on account of the commercial and financial information contained in it, and remarkable on account of the maxims of free trade that it professed. The author had added not only an inquiry into the alliances and diplomatic interests of Holland, but also an accurate estimate of the new form of government she had adopted, with a statement of the grievances which might be adduced against the stadtholdership. He had used it as an accusation brought by the city and commercial party in the towns of Holland against the power of the Princes of Orange. The Orange

¹ Delacourt, having been threatened in 1672 with sharing the fate of J. de Witt, on account of his notoriously favourable sentiment towards the Grand Pensionary, thought it prudent to withdraw himself. He repaired to Antwerp, where he found several of his compatriots, amongst others De Groot, his particular friend. He returned to Amsterdam at the end of the following year (1673), continued there his literary labours, and died in 1683, leaving behind him a posthumous work against the stadtholdership, entitled *Fables and Maxims*, which the editor calls in the epigraph *The Song of the Swan*.

party was moved; the refutation of 'The Interests of Holland' by one of its most able public writers, Parival, did not appear sufficient, and the Princess Dowager demanded that the court of justice of Holland should institute a prosecution, in order that the attacks which the author had ventured to make against the Princes of Orange should not go unpunished.

The Synod of Leyden had, on its side, taken proceedings against Delacourt's book, and ascribed to him a still more aggressive publication, the 'Political Speeches.' This was really the work of his brother, but had appeared anonymously, and Delacourt allowed it to be attributed to him. The Synod pronounced ecclesiastical censures upon him, forbidding him the sacrament; induced the burgomaster of Leyden to prohibit the booksellers of the town from selling his book; and appealed to the States to confirm the prohibition as well as the judicial condemnation. The States paid no attention to this denunciation; it was only seven years later that they followed it up. A new edition of the 'Interests of Holland' having appeared anonymously, under the title of 'Statement of the Principles and salutary Political Maxims of the Republic of Holland,' the States, who had at first, through the intervention of the Grand Pensionary, given their sanction to the work, withdrew it a few months later 'as having been surreptitiously obtained.' The author's theory of foreign alliances, as to which Delacourt cautioned Holland to be on her guard, appeared a dangerous one to sanction, and the States, who were in need of protectors abroad, were obliged to disavow the work. They even thought it right to prohibit it; but this prohibition was rather apparent than real and did not prevent the issue of a third edition three years later.

De Witt had not remained indifferent to nor unacquainted with this publication. His letters to Delacourt and to De Groot show that the author of the 'Interests of Holland' had requested the protection of the Grand Pensionary against the threats of judicial proceedings, and that De Witt, through the interposition of his friend De Groot, imparted to him observations and information on the new chapters destined for the second edition of the book. Other evidence gives

manifest proof of a still more direct participation. A contemporary relates that De Witt, having gone to Leyden to visit Delacourt at his brother-in-law's¹ house, found on his table, while awaiting his return, an unpublished pamphlet on the interests of Leyden, and that on perusing it he was so pleased with it that he begged the author to apply his learned researches to Holland. Delacourt, it is said, agreed to follow this advice, and communicated his new work to De Witt before having it printed.² De Witt is said to have taken advantage of this communication to revise the manuscript and to add to it two chapters. This statement is confirmed by the manuscript itself, as it was discovered: it bears traces of the revision of several passages corrected by the Grand Pensionary himself.

As regards the addition of the two chapters, if they were not written by his hand they are none the less his work; Delacourt has taken care to let it be known, by a note added to his manuscript, that they were to be ascribed to him. Moreover, in the preface to the second edition he expressly acknowledges himself to be indebted 'to very illustrious persons, so profoundly versed in the knowledge of everything relating to the affairs of the United Provinces and the government of Holland, that everything mentioned in these chapters passed through their hands.' He declares that 'the merit must be attributed to him who himself did what he talks about.' In conclusion, an examination of the manuscript makes it evident that one of the chapters written by Delacourt, and which was not published, is replaced in the work by two others that have been substituted for it: they are those numbered XXIX. and XXX., and entitled, 'Of the Reasons why Liberty has not brought with it more Advantages since the Death of the Prince of Orange.' 'Of the Good Fruits produced by the Beginnings of a Good Government.'

¹ The burgomaster Eleman.

² It is proved by authentic documents that Delacourt's manuscript was sent to J. de Witt on July 10, 1661. The manuscript has numerous corrections in J. de Witt's handwriting.

It was therefore under the cleverly chosen title of 'Memoirs of John de Witt' that there appeared in the next century a French translation of the second edition of the 'Interests of Holland,' although Delacourt's preface, retained at the commencement of the translation, contradicted its pretended origin. Moreover, certain portions of the book, in which Holland was asked to give up her interest in foreign affairs, by renouncing all part in foreign politics without concerning herself about alliances or treaties, are so manifestly opposed to the policy of the Grand Pensionary, which was always energetic, scrupulous, and far-sighted, as his correspondence shows, that this comparison would suffice to prevent the entire work being attributed to De Witt. On the other hand, the two chapters of which he was the author only sum up the maxims and opinions which constituted the programme of his public career. In one he stated the wrongs which might be imputed to the government of the stadtholders, whom he reproached with the useless prolongation of the war with Spain, the excess of military expenditure, the lowering of the naval power of the United Provinces, and their exclusive care for dynastic interests, which they set above those of the republic. In the other chapter, De Witt set forth the services rendered by the States of Holland since they had in some degree inherited the powers of the stadtholders. The titles to confidence that he put forward on their behalf were the reduction of interest and the diminution of the army, making it possible to reduce the taxes on food and to diminish the debt, which might be paid off within a period of thirty years. The peaceable solution of internal differences, the large increase of naval resources, and the pledges of security resulting from them, completed this defence.

In thus giving undoubted co-operation to Delacourt's work, De Witt was publishing the manifesto destined to justify the change of government. He had been anxious to bring into notice the reproaches addressed to the last stadtholders and the praises bestowed on the new holders of power. The patriotic satisfaction he displayed with regard to the work which had been already accomplished during his ministry

seemed fully justified. The party of which he was the leader had governed the republic for ten years, and in extolling the policy of Holland, after having gloriously directed it, the Grand Pensionary put forth that panegyric as a conqueror writes his bulletin of victory.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND ENGLISH WAR—A REPUBLIC VICTORIOUS OVER
A MONARCHY.

Rivalry of England with the United Provinces—Charles II. and his court—Preludes to a rupture—English hostilities in Guinea—Useless attempts at conciliation—Reprisals by the States-General—Ruyter's expedition to Africa—It is prepared by the Grand Pensionary De Witt—Declaration of war—Relations of the republic with France—Request for assistance evaded by Louis XIV.—Financial measures—Maritime forces—First naval campaign—Defeat of the Dutch fleet—The flagship blown up—Death of Obdam—Ruyter admiral-in-chief—John de Witt with the fleet—He takes it out of the Texel—Dispersion by a storm—Vain attempt to renew the battle—Expedition of the Bishop of Münster against the United Provinces—Conquest of the province of Overijssel—Insufficiency of the land forces of the States—Cornelius de Witt sent to the army—Necessity for French assistance—Despatch of a French auxiliary corps—Little service done by it—Declaration of war by France against England—More apparent than real—Negotiations of the States with Denmark and the German princes—Quadruple alliance—Treaty of Cleves with the Bishop of Münster—Second naval campaign—The four days' battle—Retreat of the English fleet—A fresh engagement—Dispersion of the fleet of the States—Incursion of the enemy—The French squadron holds aloof—Firmness of John de Witt—He returns to the fleet—Internal troubles—Revival of the Orange party—Secret negotiations of Buat with the King of England—His trial and condemnation—Proposals for peace—Congress of Breda—Beveringh ambassador of the States—Delays in the Conferences—Renewal of hostilities—Expedition to Chatham—Destruction of the English navy—Cornelius de Witt with the squadron—Correspondence of the Grand Pensionary and his brother—Success of the negotiations—Treaty of Breda—Rewards offered to Ruyter and Cornelius de Witt—Honours paid to the Grand Pensionary.

The policy of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, which up to this time had been attended with constant success, was now to be submitted to severe trials, whence, however, it was destined to issue with triumph. Every precaution that might secure to the United Provinces the benefits of peace had been taken, and yet they were now to be called upon to support the

burden of war. The alliance with Charles II., which they had just concluded, and which seemed as if it ought to protect them against the ambition of Louis XIV., was but the prelude to a rupture. Within three years of the signature of the treaty between the two States, their fleets were again to dispute the dominion of the seas, and, having been formerly entertained by the States as their guest, the King of England was to become the enemy of those who had been the first to hail his restoration.

Once replaced on his throne, Charles II. had lost no time in throwing overboard all the interests of his kingdom, that he might be free to occupy himself with pleasures to which he sacrificed his duties as a sovereign. He might easily have realised the hopes of England, too happy to escape from the misfortunes of anarchy and the dangers of military government by the re-establishment of an hereditary monarchy. His good-humoured condescension had conciliated popular favour to him at once, and he had won all hearts by his readiness of access. He charmed all who were presented to him, and who might come without hindrance to see him dine, sup, dance, or play at dice, or to listen to him when he was pleased to relate his adventures. But these surface attractions could not compensate for the qualities in which he was deficient. He had been brought up in the school of misfortune, but his character had not been matured by the course of events; his mind was as fickle as his heart, and inconsistency in his attachments seemed as natural to him as infidelity in his alliances. He was insensible to glory and indifferent to flattery, but gave himself up to the most careless indolence, and was tenacious of power rather from love of repose than from desire to rule. The French system of government, by which Louis XIV. was free from all control, seemed to him the only form suitable for royalty, and the embarrassed condition of his finances made the dependence in which he was held by his parliament still more insupportable. He preferred to be ruled by his favourites, and had taken as his acknowledged mistress Lady Castlemaine, whom he afterwards created Duchess of Cleveland. Surrounded by

courtiers who laughed at all beliefs and ridiculed all virtues, he set the example, speedily followed, of every species of license, exhibited in broad daylight without restraint or reserve. Three years after the restoration, Brand, the envoy of the Elector of Brandenburg, writes to his master: 'There is frightful corruption in the English court; none but women are to be found there, and nothing but love affairs spoken of. The king does nothing but amuse himself with his mistresses, and the whole court is daily sinking deeper into contempt with the country.' The sensualist philosopher Hobbes, whom Saint-Evremond called the greatest genius of England, moulded public morality to his doctrines. Death or absence left many vacant places in the royal family round the throne. One of the king's brothers, the Duke of Gloucester, had been prematurely snatched away in the flower of youth from the affections of all Englishmen. One of his sisters, the Princess Mary, the mother of the young Prince of Orange, had returned to the old palace of Whitehall only to fall a victim to a brief illness. From his second sister, the Princess Henrietta, he was separated by her unhappy marriage with the Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV. As to the queen-mother, Henrietta of France, Henry IV.'s daughter and Charles I.'s widow, whose courage and pious resignation had equalled her misfortunes, she had returned to end her days in her native country after a passing visit to her former kingdom. She lived in retirement in her country house of Colombes, near Paris; and, some months before her death, which occurred on August 3, 1669, was reduced to humiliating remonstrances to obtain from an ungrateful son the payment in full of her pension, of which she had been deprived of one-fourth. The new Queen of England, Catherine of Braganza, daughter of the King of Portugal, had no children, and was neglected by her husband. The king's brother, James, duke of York, stood alone on the steps of the throne. Notwithstanding the long-continued refusal of the queen-mother, he had married the daughter of the prime minister, the Earl of Clarendon, with whom he had carried on an intrigue during his exile, and who had a son by him.

He had acquired the confidence of Charles II. in spite of their total dissimilarity of character. His intellect was narrow and sluggish, his will obstinate; and his liking for business, so opposed to Charles's love of pleasure, completed the contrast between the two brothers. The royal prerogative was to him an article of faith, and he encouraged Charles in his ideas of absolute monarchy, while the sincere belief which determined him in later years to abjure Protestantism was in accordance with his political predilection for the Catholic religion, which, by enforcing submission to religious authority, seemed to him to secure the obedience of subjects to their sovereign.

The ministers were reduced to a secondary authority. The Marquis of Ormond, master of the king's household, who had been one of the last defenders of Charles I., the lord treasurer, the Earl of Southampton, the secretaries of state, Sir Edward Nicholas and Morris, even the Lord-General Monk himself, to whom Charles owed his crown, all gave way before the Lord Chancellor Hyde, Earl of Clarendon. He had been the faithful adviser of Charles II. in his exile, and now became, after the restoration, the first personage in the kingdom. But the credit which he owed to his long experience, and the recollection of his services, had lost rather than gained by the marriage of his daughter with the Duke of York. In spite of the apparent opposition offered by him, the royal family could not easily forgive his having become father-in-law to the heir to the throne. His high position, enhanced by this relationship, exposed him to envy. He had many detractors around the king who could not pardon his attachment to his duties, his devotion to the interests of the kingdom, or his resistance to the fancies and extravagances of the royalist party. His incorruptible honesty and his serious tastes left him to stand alone in the midst of a licentious court; while his political opinions, which admitted of no concessions, estranged from him the popular party. Having thus no support in his government, he was forced to follow the course of events instead of guiding them. After vainly attempting to dissuade Charles from coming to an understanding with France, by the sale of Dunkirk to Louis XIV., he reluctantly

allowed him to provoke a breach between England and the States-General without offering any resistance to this short-sighted policy.

The King of England believed it to be for his interest to wage war with the United Provinces. He not only cherished the secret hope of thus forcing Parliament to grant him the large subsidies that he needed, but he also counted upon gratifying the feelings of the English nation, which manifested an implacable jealousy of the prosperity of Dutch commerce. In thus setting England and the United Provinces against each other, he had also in view his family interests, and flattered himself that by a successful war he might force upon the States-General the re-establishment of his nephew the Prince of Orange. He took pride, besides, in the idea of humiliating a republic which had been the ally of Cromwell, and which gave offence to the Court of England by the rigorous observance of the Calvinistic form of worship, by the austerity of its morals and the freedom of its institutions. Charles had not awaited his return to his kingdom to give secret expression to his real sentiments, and at the very time when the States were giving him a solemn reception at the Hague, he was already proposing to show his gratitude by a long-premeditated rupture. According to Wicquefort, when he embarked in Holland to cross over to England, there were persons in his suite, and even among those most in his confidence, who had not feared to say to the friends of the House of Orange to whom they thought it safe to open their minds, that it was not to be supposed that the good things set before the king could reconcile him to those whom he would rather chastise than caress.

This animosity on Charles's part could not have been better served than by Downing, his minister at the Hague, who was never without expedients to conjure up and perpetuate differences. An article in the last treaty furnished him with the pretext he required to prelude the rupture by a war of pamphlets and legal disputes. This was the clause which permitted the owners of the English vessels, the 'Good Adventure' and the 'Good Hope,' to proceed with the lawsuit which

they had commenced.' This lawsuit, which had lasted twenty years, originated in the capture of these two vessels, whose owners had obtained damages from the India Company to the amount of 42,500 florins. But one of the parties interested, having declared that this sum had been improperly paid to the person who had previously made over to him his claims, and who had become insolvent and bankrupt, had brought an appeal before the sheriffs of Amsterdam. After long debate a compromise was proposed by De Witt, and seemed about to be successful, when Downing overthrew it, by professing to be able to obtain double the indemnity offered. In order to fix the sum at his own pleasure, he bought up the claim and transferred it to the English India Company for the sum of 850,000 florins, and then alleged that the case, being no longer one between private persons, ought to be moved into another court. He insisted that it should be taken out of the hands of the sheriffs of Amsterdam and submitted to commissioners from both nations. The States, foreseeing that if the case were once submitted to English commissioners agreement would become impossible, offered to call in the arbitration of foreign tribunals; but this offer was refused, and Downing accompanied the refusal with threatening expressions. The Grand Pensionary De Witt was not to be intimidated. He boldly exposed the subterfuges of the English envoy. Indignant at the audacity with which Downing affirmed that he had in his hands a letter which proved that the controversy concerning the two vessels in dispute ought to be decided as an affair of state, and not as a mere suit between private persons, he flung down his hat upon the table and challenged him to produce the letter, promising to give him satisfaction as soon as he had shown it. Downing attempted some vain excuses, saying that he would not give them the trouble of waiting. De Witt retorted that he might take his time in searching for the letter, and promised to hold himself in readiness to receive it until midnight. But Downing had no mind to profit by this proposal, and by evading it disclosed his imposture. The firmness of the Grand Pensionary had disconcerted him. De Witt declared afterwards 'that for his part he thought they

were a free state no longer if they should yield a point that they not only knew the English had no ground for, but were sure the English knew it as well as they.' 'It would be better,' he wrote to the Prince of Nassau, 'to resist to the last extremity, that that nation might not become still more insolent. According to the old saying, "He who too easily endures old affronts prepares for himself new ones."' The Court of England was quite ready to give up any such pretensions. 'What need,' asked Monk, 'to insist upon the restitution of the two ships?' The real question was quite another matter: the thing was that England should extend her commerce. 'Must that of Holland, then,' asked the envoy of the republic, 'be sacrificed to it? Commerce is surely a treasure which all men's labour does but increase.' 'Yes,' replied Monk, 'but at any cost our nation must have her share, or peace will not last long.'

It was in order to make the war popular that Charles II. had entered into a legal dispute unworthy of a great nation, but which was favoured by the English character. 'This country,' wrote the ambassador of the States in London, 'is full of fancies and wedded to all that it takes up, of an arrogant temper and, above all, obstinately contentious and taking a sort of pride in being so.' Unable, however, in this manner to give sufficient satisfaction to the national vain-glory, the King of England determined to provoke a violent outbreak of hostilities by seizing, without any declaration of war, those colonies of the republic which offered a formidable competition to the trade of his kingdom.

For half a century past the Dutch had been founding factories on the coast of Africa and in South America, which were now in a flourishing condition. Not thinking that any attacks from without were to be feared in time of peace, they had just recalled Ruyter's fleet, which had been cruising for the last two years in the Mediterranean, winning glory by its chastisement of the Barbary corsairs. While his ships were returning to the Dutch ports, four and twenty English vessels, under the command of Robert Holms, were despatched on an actually piratical expedition to Africa. Holms began by seizing eleven merchantmen which he met on his way; and then, at

the beginning of the year 1664, took possession of the island of Goree, of Cape Verde, and of most of the stations belonging to the States-General in these waters. Pursuing his course along the coast of Guinea, he continued his facile conquests, sullyng them by massacres which marked in blood the progress of the English dominion. He next directed his course to North America, occupied the islands of Tobago, St. Eustace, and New Holland, which he re-named New York in honour of the King of England's brother. The English government pretended ignorance of these acts of violence, and, instead of disavowing them, put forward a claim to recover these possessions, by appealing on the one hand to a supposed gift of the King of Portugal of the territories on the coast of Guinea, and alleging on the other that the American lands had been formerly conceded by James I. to one of his subjects, the Earl of Stirling. Public opinion encouraged this offensive policy. On the opening of Parliament the House of Commons had presented an address to the king to urge upon him the necessity of protecting English commerce against foreign competition. When Parliament was prorogued, the Speaker, in returning thanks to the king, recommended to him the interests of his subjects, and the city of London lent him a million to fit out a fleet, the destination of which it was easy to foresee.

On receiving the first news of this violation of the rights of nations, the States-General made another effort at conciliating the King of England on a point which he had seemed to have at heart. In the preceding year Charles had expressed his displeasure with the States for not having sent to him any ambassador since the conclusion of the last treaty. He had forbidden his ministers to hold any intercourse with the secretary of the embassy, who had remained in London in the capacity of resident, and had informed him that he would receive no diplomatic communication excepting through his envoy at the Hague, Mr. Downing. To satisfy him, the States-General now urged upon Zealand, to whom belonged the selection of the English ambassador, to make the appointment so long delayed. The embassy, which had at first seemed

destined for Boreel, nephew of the ambassador in France, was given to Michael van Gogh, pensionary of Flushing, who had already, in company with Beverwaert, taken part in the negotiations for the last treaty with England. To secure him a favourable reception, the States-General, 'who had not much confidence in his very limited capacity,' sent with him Colonel Killigrew, who was of English origin, and the friend and kinsman of Monk.

Faithful to their pacific policy, they sought only to avoid the necessity of replying to the provocation offered to them. They had just sent Ruyter with twelve ships to the Mediterranean to exact the maintenance of the conditions of peace from the Algerian pirates by whom these had been violated. On his way, Ruyter met the English vice-admiral, Lawson, who was returning with seven sail from a cruise in the same waters. He fired a salute and dipped his flag, the English admiral returned the salute but did not dip his flag; Ruyter was indignant, and resolved in future not to dip his, alleging that he was not in British waters, and declared that he had verbal orders which authorised him to abstain from so doing. De Witt was informed of Ruyter's proposed conduct by De Mortaigne, the States commissioner with the fleet, and replied at once, in the name of the States of Holland, that the treaty must be strictly observed. He added that this salute by dipping the flag ought not to be limited to British waters, as that might be interpreted into subjection to the English dominion. He did not hesitate even to disavow Ruyter, and represented that an officer who was in the habit of receiving written orders could not be dispensed from a salute by any verbal directions; and in anticipation of the event of Admiral Lawson refusing a second time to dip his flag, he intimated that it would be sufficient to report the matter to the States.

The Grand Pensionary was resolved to neglect no precaution that might prevent a sudden rupture, and was meanwhile endeavouring to turn to some account the negotiations already commenced. Notwithstanding the inexperience of Van Gogh, De Witt had confidence in the effects of his diplomacy. 'We have heard with pleasure of your arrival,' he

writes to him, 'and we hope that you will have an opportunity of convincing the king and his minister of the injustice of their pretensions.' His wish for conciliation is equally apparent in the letter that he wrote to Boreel, the ambassador of the United Provinces in France: 'The States of Holland are of opinion that in order to have a conscience at ease before God and man in case matters should come to the last extremity, it is well to yield as far as possible whenever there are two sides to the question.'

But this wish for a good understanding did not make the Grand Pensionary of Holland lose sight of the imperative necessity for reparation. 'Without satisfaction for the attempt made in Guinea,' he wrote to Van Gogh, 'it would be impossible to expect peace.' This satisfaction was demanded in vain, and as Downing constantly evaded it by illusory promises, the States-General determined that they would not be attacked with impunity. They ordered the armament of twelve ships for the defence of Guinea, although Downing declared that their leaving harbour would be equivalent to a declaration of war. Even when this resolution was taken, it did not seem possible that it should be executed before the English fleet had received its sailing orders, in which case it might be beforehand with the Dutch squadron. De Witt undertook to hasten the projected expedition, and at the same time to keep it secret, that England might be unable to offer any opposition. Whatever obstacles he met with, the ingenuity of his mind and the strength of his character made him always discover expedients to ensure the prompt execution of his plans. 'So long as he believed,' wrote in after years the French ambassador at the Hague, 'that he could settle the English affair by means of negotiations, he took all possible pains to that end; but when he lost that hope, he took upon himself the dangerous responsibility of counselling the imposition of peace or making war on a great power.'

Ruyter's squadron, which had just been sent back to the Mediterranean to enforce upon the Dey of Algiers respect for treaties, might suffice for the defence of the colonies of the republic. He was lying off the coast of Spain, and was there

within reach of the African factories, to protect or reconquer them before the English fleet could come up with him. But Ruyter could only be charged with this mission with the consent of the States-General, and the temper of some of the members who had been gained over by Downing seemed to make almost inevitable the divulgence of the orders which they might give him. The Grand Pensionary kept the secret by means of a subterfuge.

A committee of seven members, of whom he was one, had been named to receive the report made by Ruyter of his expedition to the coast of Africa. This committee had knowledge of the proposition just made by the States of Holland to send Ruyter to Guinea with orders 'to retake all the forts seized by the English, and to destroy all ships which had done or should do any harm to the Dutch merchants.' This proposition having been approved and signed by the committee in the form of a resolution, the question was only how to obtain executive authority for it from the States-General. In order to obtain the consent of the Federal Assembly without its knowledge, the committee, by the advice of John de Witt, appended the resolution which they had drawn up to one taken two days previously, for the equipment of a new squadron, and which was to be read a second time. Ruysch, the secretary of the States-General, with whom De Witt was on the most intimate terms, was taken into their confidence; he was instructed to open the communication that he was to make to the Federal Assembly by the reports of Ruyter's expedition, and then to read rapidly the resolution attached to it, so as to create the belief that it referred only to the preceding matter. The members of the committee were careful also to keep away the deputies whom they mistrusted, and whose indiscretion was to be feared. Deputy Kann, of the province of Friesland, who had not acquired much knowledge of public affairs in his former practice as a surgeon, had just been summoned to the office of president for the week now beginning; he had not been present at the sitting in which the first resolution had been passed, and paid no attention to the second reading. One last formality remained to be accomplished, that of the signature.

According to the rules of the States-General, this was to be affixed by the president who was in the chair on the day when the vote was taken. The resolution for the fitting out of the squadron having been passed on the previous Saturday, it was the last week's president who had to sign it. In order to avoid any risk to the success of their manœuvre, the committee were careful to make no distinction between the two resolutions, and dated both alike, thus antedating by two days that just taken for despatching sailing orders to Ruyter. The president of the preceding week, John van Reede de Reuswoude, deputy of Guelders, unsuspectingly signed both papers among the mass of documents presented to him. The secret thus guarded by this parliamentary ruse was religiously kept by those acquainted with it. Notwithstanding his usual scrupulous respect for formalities, De Witt had eluded them, in the persuasion that he was only faithfully interpreting the opinion of the States-General by making the second resolution the necessary complement of the first.

The instructions prepared for Ruyter were sent to him confidentially by the members of the Amsterdam Admiralty, who had entire confidence in his discretion. He received them while at Malaga and prepared immediately to obey. He put the English fleet, now returning from Algiers, on a false scent, and not till he was in mid-ocean announced to his captains the expedition that he was about to undertake. The factories which the English had seized made no resistance to his attack. After surprising and taking the ships stationed at Goree, he forced the fort at Cape Verde to surrender. Sailing next to the Guinea coast, he retook the island of Sierra Leone, made himself master of the fortress of Tacorari, sailed up the river Gambia, attacked the fort of Cormantin and carried it by assault, leaving to the English only the fort of Cabo-Corso, which he could not take without the assistance of the natives, who remained faithful to their English alliance.

This daring enterprise was kept secret from the English Government long enough to delay the despatch of any reinforcements. Its confidence remained unshaken as long as the ships which were to be sent to Ruyter remained in harbour.

Some vague rumours, however, having raised suspicions, Downing received instructions to get to the bottom of the mystery which was beginning to cause uneasiness to his employers. Downing, who liked to have it thought that he ruled the whole republic, called upon the Grand Pensionary. Convinced of De Witt's rectitude, and knowing that he never deceived anyone, he did not hesitate to ask him if orders to proceed to Africa had been sent to Ruyter, and thought to confuse him by adding that he considered him too upright a man to utter a falsehood. According to a contemporary account, De Witt, who could never be taken at unawares, was not content with eluding his curiosity, but also, without departing from the truth, dispelled his suspicions while he flattered his vanity. 'You may be sure,' he said, 'that the States of Holland have given no orders which could give any uneasiness to the king your master. As to the States-General, it is not necessary for me to tell you what passes in that Assembly, since there is nothing done there in private that is not known to you, so that there is no need for me to inform you.' Downing, easily convinced by this answer, assured the English Government that matters were secure, and imparted to it his own presumptuous confidence.

Charles therefore still hoped to gain time, and so to take by surprise the United Provinces before they could assume the offensive. Accordingly, he would not yet openly break off all negotiations, though still continuing unyielding. He demanded, before laying down his arms, that he should be reimbursed the sums expended on the equipment of his fleet, and as the States-General were not disposed to grant him this satisfaction, he declared 'that not only would he send more ships to the Guinea coast, but that before six months were over he would begin war in Europe.'

When the news of Ruyter's expedition was received in London, the first feeling was one of stupefaction. 'It has caused such apprehension,' wrote the States ambassador, Van Gogh, 'that public opinion has turned against the war.' It was with this hope that the Grand Pensionary had hazarded so bold a stroke. In a private letter to this brother-in-law he

writes: 'When the English see that the republic maintains the motto of the Batavian lion, "Nemo me impune lacessit," they will perhaps return to more pacific sentiments.'

His expectation was, however, deceived. Fear soon gave place to anger. The King of England expressed such irritation that the secretary of state, Morris, said to Van Gogh: 'If your Excellency were not personally so much liked at court, I do not know how you would be received in future. The ministers summoned together in all haste declared unanimously that no further terms should be kept, and the Duke of York, who was passionately in favour of the war, offered to take command of the naval forces. Van Gogh, who up to this time had been too much inclined to accept in all good faith the advances made towards him, was no longer to be deceived; he even expressed some apprehension of 'plans which might be resorted to for the burning of the ships and magazines in Holland.' De Witt, persuaded at last, though unwillingly, of the uselessness of negotiations, acknowledged, as he now confessed, that it was impossible for him to believe in any accommodation being brought about. 'Concessions would serve now,' he wrote to the ambassador of the States, 'only to throw oil upon the flames.'

The English Government was too impatient to avenge the enterprises of Ruyter to wait for a declaration of war. A powerful fleet seized a merchant convoy of a hundred and thirty vessels laden with wine from Bordeaux. The Smyrna fleet, with its rich cargo, was also attacked; but it was escorted by some men-of-war which offered a gallant defence. After a sanguinary encounter, in which the commander of the escort was killed, the English were obliged to retire. They had to content themselves with the capture of two vessels while the rest of their coveted prey escaped them. It was easier to lay violent hands upon all the merchant ships which had unsuspectingly remained in the English harbours; their goods were seized and sold without scruple. Letters of marque were issued to all English subjects, while the States-General on their part, though they had recourse to privateers, were content to prohibit the entry of English goods, and offered no

reprisals to the confiscations from which their commerce suffered. The House of Commons, eager to encourage by liberality the policy of the Government, voted for the expenses of the navy two and a half millions, payable in twelve instalments, on the security of which the merchants of London advanced a million. Nothing was wanted to complete the rupture already begun but the declaration of war, hitherto delayed by the chancellor who continued to desire peace. In March 1665, the English Government published it, as if to comply with a neglected formality. In their proclamation they made known that they refused all guarantees with regard to neutrals, without exception in favour either of the country from which the goods were shipped, if they were carried under the Dutch flag, or of the flag under which they sailed if Dutch merchandise were carried in foreign vessels. It was not enough for Charles II. to destroy their fleets; he desired also to ruin their commerce. Thirteen years previously the States-General had waged against the head of the English republic a disastrous war which had imperilled their independence. They were now, on the morrow of the restoration of English royalty, to defend against the successor of Charles I. the freedom of the seas without which their republic could not exist.

The United Provinces had a right to expect protection from France against this new aggression, to oppose which they might appeal to the last treaty of defensive alliance that they had concluded with Louis XIV. In the hope of obtaining its prompt execution, Van Beuningen, the ambassador who had conducted the negotiations, was sent back to Paris on an extraordinary mission. But although the Court of France had long been displeased with Boreel, the ambassador in ordinary of the States, whose recall indeed had been asked for, the choice of Van Beuningen gave offence. The French ambassador, Count d'Estrades, recalled to the Grand Pensionary what De Witt had himself said to him concerning 'his difficult temper, his obstinate and headstrong character, and habit of subtle distinctions, so that he himself had difficulty in getting on with him although he was his best friend.' D'Estrades thought it would be better 'to leave him at home

to philosophise after his own tastes, and not to run the risk of sending him to a court formed of people who had a great dislike to any abrupt way of dealing with business. De Witt finally overcame these prejudices. He represented that the city of Amsterdam had the right of appointing the ambassador to France, and would be satisfied with no other choice. He made the most of the support given him by Van Beuningen in opposing the proposals of Spain in favour of a league between the Low Countries and the United Provinces, and protested that he had never ceased to be in favour of the French alliance. Van Beuningen declared also to D'Estrades that he had made the States promise that they would not oblige him to remain in France a single day after the king should have notified to him that his presence was not agreeable. The French ambassador allowed himself at last to be convinced. After delaying his departure for six months, Van Beuningen arrived at the court of Louis XIV., and met with a reception with which he declared himself satisfied.

The Dutch ambassador was commissioned to claim the fulfilment of the engagements by which the king of France was bound to furnish a force of 12,000 men to the States-General. But Louis had stipulated for a delay of four months before he should be required to take part in the war; and, besides, he had only promised assistance in case the States-General were not the aggressors, and should be attacked in Europe. The call made upon him might therefore be evaded by delays and disputes, which it was to his interest to take advantage of. He would have been glad to keep terms both with the United Provinces and with England, in order to prevent them from declaring in favour of Spain, whenever the death of Philip IV. should allow him to put forward his claims to the Low Countries. He could not conceal from himself, however, that if he abandoned the United Provinces they must fall under the dominion of the King of England, who would keep them in subjection, by re-establishing the authority of his nephew, the Prince of Orange, who would act as a sort of viceroy to Charles. But if he were to consent to

alienate England by assisting them, he wished, at any rate, to get some advantage in return for the help he gave. The intention of Louis XIV. was to obtain, as the price of his intervention, the recognition of the rights he claimed over the Spanish Netherlands. To this purpose, both at Paris and at the Hague, the most pressing advances were made by Lionne to Van Beuningen, and by D'Estrades to De Witt. 'Everything is thrown into confusion,' wrote Lionne to the Dutch ambassador, 'by the bad policy of insisting upon a barrier between the United Provinces and France.' Meanwhile D'Estrades was commissioned to make the most to the Grand Pensionary of the interested advances of England, 'which offered to allow the King of France free action in all that he might desire towards this portion of the Spanish monarchy.' De Witt could not, however, bring himself to give up the point; he would not consent 'thus to re-open the question of the treaty of alliance which had been concluded with the French Government,' and from which he did not believe that Louis XIV., 'bound by his kingly word,' could free himself.

The King of France was obliged to recognise that 'this man could not give up his original idea,' and he could only console himself with the hope 'that some ill-success might befall the States, and reduce them to a more pliant condition.' Henceforth he resolved only to assist the United Provinces in case they should be reduced to the last extremity, and instead of troubling himself to avert the menaced war, he proposed to interfere, merely to increase its duration. The weakening of both belligerents seemed to him his best security for conquering the Low Countries. With this idea, Lionne was careful to leave the States ambassador a prey to ever-recurring perplexities, by opposing to his urgent demands formal objections and pretexts for adjournment. In order to prolong this state of uncertainty, Louis XIV. offered his mediation to the two governments, to whom he even proposed himself as arbitrator. But he took no steps to carry out his offer, and only despatched the extraordinary ambassadors whom he was sending to London on the very eve of hostilities, when the differences between the two countries could no longer offer any

hope of conciliation. These delays could not fail to throw doubts on the sincerity of the King of France. The suspicions of the States-General were the more justified, that 'his envoys acted as if their only instructions had been to gain the friendship of the King of England at the expense of the United Provinces.'

In other ways too, far from coming to their aid, the French Government rather took up an aggressive attitude towards them. A decree in council, suggested by Colbert, threatened with immediate seizure the Dutch vessels then in French harbours. This violent measure was resorted to by Louis to force the States to deliver up three ships of war purchased at Amsterdam by the French India Company. The States, on the other hand, contended that they had the right to retain them in their own ports, by reason of a general regulation forbidding the exit of vessels constructed for foreign powers, as the whole naval strength of the republic was needed for use against England. They contented themselves with offering pecuniary compensation for any damage that might result. The King of France imperiously repeated his demands, and after endeavouring to evade them by conciliatory offers, the States gave way, rather than leave him any pretext for displeasure.

De Witt was too far-sighted, and too well-informed by his diplomatic correspondence of the secret intentions of the French Government, not to have been troubled with well-grounded alarm. His fears increased when he heard that an envoy from Charles II. had arrived secretly in France, and had been received in private by Louis XIV. He was aware, however, of the necessity of concealing his suspicions. Two deputies from Haarlem and Dordrecht having produced letters which announced the good understanding between the two monarchs, he told them in presence of the Assembly that these letters were concocted by Downing, to keep alive the misunderstanding between France and the republic, and added that the King of France was the father of their nation, and that he would not abandon his children. He never ceased, moreover, to address remonstrances to the ambassador of Louis in language at once bold and conciliatory, in the hope of thus obtaining equit-

able conditions in an arrangement with England. But public opinion was not to be deceived by the double game played by French diplomacy. 'No doubt is felt,' wrote D'Estrades, 'that the delays which appear in your Majesty's inquiry as to which of the two nations was the aggressor, are an indication that your Majesty will give them no assistance, and will allow them to enter into the struggle with England so as to profit by their dismemberment. Such is the general talk in the assemblies, and in all society at the Hague.'

The States-General were obliged therefore to rely upon themselves. 'Although there is still some hope that the King of France may fulfil his obligations,' De Witt announced boldly to Van Beuningen, 'nevertheless their High Mightinesses take action as if they must act alone, and put their trust in the grace of God.' 'We have no resource now but in our arms,' he said to D'Estrades with proud resignation, 'and as remonstrances are of no avail, the States will wait until the King of France executes the treaty of his own accord.' Thus, at the moment when the republic which had formerly been allied both with France and England was attacked by Charles II., and had need more than ever of the alliance of Louis XIV., she seemed reduced to despair of any such aid.

The confidence of the Grand Pensionary was not shaken by this unlooked-for isolation. The preparations for war, to which he had given the most assiduous attention, had been carried on with vigour and forethought, unslackened by the scourge of the plague which was raging in the principal towns, and which in Amsterdam carried off fifteen hundred persons in one week. The States-General had devoted the utmost care to the maritime forces; they had ordered the construction of a large number of ships, and had enlisted more sailors. The land forces had been at the same time re-organised and augmented. The fear of a war with Charles obliged the States to disband the English and Scotch troops in their service. But they retained under the banners of the Republic those officers and soldiers who refused to return to their own country, and having required them to renew their oath of fidelity, they distributed them into three regiments commanded by colonels

in whom they had full reliance. This reduction in the foreign troops was compensated by new levies which enabled the effective strength of the companies to be raised, as well as the number of the regiments to be increased, and a body of marines was also formed of 6,900 picked soldiers. The army, which had formerly consisted of only 25,000 men, was thus raised to 32,000.

The States-General showed the same foresight in providing for the financial demands. They voted a sum of twenty-four tons of gold¹ for the expenses of the war, and laid a tax upon wine and vinegar solely for the construction of new ships. The province of Holland set an example of self-sacrifice. Of the twenty-four tons of gold, representing 2,400,000 florins, levied by the States-General from the seven provinces, Holland undertook to furnish fourteen (1,400,000 florins), and was undaunted by taxes or loans to meet the extraordinary expenses which she was called upon bear. Her revenue in ordinary times amounted to 6,836,445 florins, of which 1,336,445 florins was deducted for the boards of admiralty. To add to this the States of Holland re-established the income tax of a half per cent. which had been raised during the first war with England, and had immediately after it been reduced to a tenth; but there was difficulty in collecting it and it never produced more than 600,000 florins, which was not above half what had been anticipated. The tolls on roads and canals were also greatly increased, and produced more than 500,000 florins per annum, in consequence of the great number of passengers, which amounted to about 40,000 annually on the boats between Amsterdam and Haarlem. A new tax was levied upon ovens and chimneys which produced 300,000 florins. The land tax was doubled. The new demands thus made upon the taxpayers did not, however, suffice, although they were estimated at five and a half millions of florins. It was necessary to make use of funds which for the last ten years had been employed to pay off the debt, and notwithstanding their honest repugnance to burdening the future, the States could not avoid the necessity of borrowing. A first loan of four millions was

¹ The ton of gold was worth 100,000 florins.

voted bearing interest at four per cent., and with contingent annuities of six per cent. Four months later a second loan of another million was added to this. The next year three more were raised; the first of a million, the second of 500,000 florins, the third of a million again. The English war thus increased the public debt by 8,000,000 florins. On all sides the appeal was responded to with the most patriotic zeal. The municipal governments all gave their consent; they pressed forward the collection of the taxes, and some even offered to advance the amounts. The receiver of Amsterdam declared that if a payment of 20,000,000 were demanded of him, 'he should receive them with no more delay than would be required to count them.' The magistrates of this city professed themselves ready to interrupt all commerce for a year, by drafting into the service of the State the 12,000 seamen and the numerous vessels employed in the mercantile marine. The public interest demanded the sacrifice of all private interests, and the demand was nobly complied with. De Witt was not content with encouraging the patriotic zeal exhibited by the States of Holland, so as to put the republic in a position to meet the charges of the war. He spared no exertion to obtain an equally ready response from the other provinces. The maritime states shared the ardour of Holland, and the States of Friesland, whom Downing had represented to Charles II. as not intending to contribute towards the cost of the war, had recourse to a loan to anticipate the payment of their quota. But the provinces which were not directly interested in naval affairs, amongst others Guelders and Overijssel, were less prompt in making their payments; and the Grand Pensionary of Holland was deputed by the States-General to represent to them the necessity of settling matters with the Confederation. 'Purses cannot be filled,' he said to the deputies of the States of Overijssel, in a speech that attracted notice at the time, 'nor are debts paid by words, but in sterling coin. Public business cannot be carried on without money, money forms the sinews of war, and their High Mightinesses have for this reason ordered us to see that this assembly responds to their demand with all due speed.'

When the war became more and more imminent, and the only uncertainty left was as to the day on which it might be declared, eight commissioners were sent from the States-General to superintend and hasten the departure of the fleet. They made a tour of the coasts, to put them in a state of defence by the despatch of garrisons, the construction of forts, and the establishment of entrenched batteries. They distributed arms to the peasants in all the villages along the coast, and found 30,000 of their inhabitants ready to oppose the landing of the enemy. They visited also the ports selected for the assembly of the squadrons, and appointed as a meeting-place for the whole fleet the roads of the Texel, to which they sent the deputies from the Admiralties. They settled with them all the arrangements for the embarkation of the troops, over which they themselves presided, going from ship to ship until nightfall. De Witt seemed to multiply himself in order to accomplish this task. He had acquired as complete a knowledge of naval affairs as if he had studied them from his infancy. 'He might be seen,' wrote Count d'Estrades, 'dressed in grey with gold buttons, his sword at his side, his cravat tied with a flame-coloured ribbon, and a cane in his hand (urging forward on the spot the equipment and despatch of the fleet), and never taking any rest. In truth,' adds the French ambassador with disdainful approval, 'though a lawyer by profession he is a man of courage and of great merit.'

The fleet at the disposal of the republic consisted of 103 line-of-battle ships, 11 fireships, and 12 galiots, besides 40 vessels intended to serve as a reserve squadron; it carried 4,800 guns, and was manned by 22,000 men. The captains appointed were worthy to command it. It was placed under the orders of Wassenaar Obdam, who had distinguished himself in the Northern war, and had been by common consent appointed lieutenant-admiral-general. In order to increase the number of general officers, the States of Holland created three appointments of lieutenant-admirals for each of their Admiralties. For the Admiralty of the Meuse they selected Cortenaar, who had like Obdam served with distinction in the Northern war; for the Admiralty of Amsterdam,

Ruyter, who had not yet returned from Guinea; and for the Admiralty of North Holland, Van Meppel, who had taken part under Ruyter in the expedition to Cape Verde. They were supported by three vice-admirals, Van Nès, Tromp, son of the former admiral of the republic, and Volkert Schram. The Friesland division was commanded by Stellingwerf and that of Zeeland had for its intrepid commander John Evertz.

Seamen of such renown formed a splendid naval staff for the republic; the crews might well be proud to obey them. To encourage them in the performance of their duty, the States had not merely increased their rations, but had promised assistance and pensions to the wounded, and in case of death a double pension for the widows and children. Rewards were voted also for the capture of the enemy's ships, and a recompense of 25,000 florins to whoever should take the flagship; finally, large gratuities were reserved for the shipbuilders who had furnished vessels for the campaign. On the other hand, the surrender of a man-of-war was to be punishable by death, which was to be equally applicable to officers withdrawing from the battle without orders. Having thus put in action all the means at their disposal, the States-General appealed to the Divine protection for aid, and prayers were ordered to be offered in every province. On the suggestion of the States of Holland they were to be repeated weekly as long as the war lasted. 'Nothing,' wrote D'Estrades, 'can exceed the resolution of the chiefs, and of all the sailors and soldiers, nor yet their unanimity; they are so persuaded of the success of the struggle that greater cheerfulness was never seen, nor so great a desire to come to blows.'

The English fleet with which they were to measure their strength numbered 109 line-of-battle ships, 21 fireships, and 7 galiots, carried 4,192 guns, and was manned by 21,000 sailors. The Duke of York held the chief command, and had under him Prince Rupert, son of the former King of Bohemia and of Elizabeth, sister of Charles I., one of the most valiant champions of the royal cause against the parliamentary party, to whom he had made himself formidable both by land and sea. The other lieutenants of the Duke of York were

Vice-Admiral Montague, now Earl of Sandwich, and Rear-Admirals Lawson, Mings, and Ayscue, who had proved their courage and capacity in former wars. The superiority of the English fleet was mainly due to its good discipline. 'Nothing can surpass the splendid battle array of the English navy,' writes a contemporary who had witnessed the spectacle; 'their ships form the most perfectly straight line you can imagine, and they thus bring their whole broadsides to bear on those who approach them; the only way to get the better of them is to break their line and board them. They fight like a well-drilled body of cavalry which concentrates all its efforts on repelling the enemy, while the Dutch advance like a troop whose squadrons break their ranks and charge separately.' This unanimity of movement was to be the means of securing victory to the English fleet.

De Witt, confident in the superiority of numbers, was impatient for an engagement. By his direction anchor was weighed, notwithstanding the objections of the pilots, who under protest of danger in leaving the roadstead were desirous to keep the ships in harbour so as to retain for their wives the trade in provisions for the crews. The Grand Pensionary hoped, by commencing hostilities without delay, to baffle the intrigues of the Orange party. The sympathy shown by Obdam, as soon as he was named admiral, for the cause of the Prince of Orange, made him suspicious of so sudden a change of opinions. He feared that Obdam desired to remain within reach of the shore, in order to be ready to support a rising in the interior, which the Duke of York seemed to be counting upon, to judge from his intercepted correspondence. Not liking to leave him in full command of the fleet, he had proposed to go on board, but the friends and relations of the admiral had prevented the acceptance of his offer, and he was thenceforth more anxious to bring Obdam speedily face to face with the enemy, never doubting that, the struggle once begun, he would prove himself the loyal and trusty defender of the republic.

The States-General shared in the Grand Pensionary's hopes, though not in his suspicions; they believed themselves

secure of promptly concluding the naval campaign by a victory. They accordingly sent to Obdam the most pressing orders to assume the offensive. 'They had no doubt,' they wrote to him, 'that before receiving their letter he had already reached the English coast, or was within reach of the English fleet. In case this should not be so, however, they desired him to use all diligence to come up with the enemy without loss of time. But, having neglected to take advantage of the wind, which had been for two days in his favour, Obdam was now checked by the dead calm which detained him at the mouth of the Meuse, and he wrote to the States to request fresh instructions, informing them that the enemy had the wind in his favour. He received, however, orders to attack, under pain of being called to account for his conduct. He at once summoned a council of war, and the principal officers having voted for delay, he told them that although he shared their opinion he could not avoid obeying his orders, adding that he would only return to Holland covered with laurels or with cypress. The republic was to pay dearly for this precipitancy, imprudently encouraged by John de Witt.

At daybreak, Obdam weighed anchor and proceeded in search of the English fleet, and at four o'clock in the morning of Saturday, June 13, 1665, the battle commenced, ten miles off the coast of Suffolk opposite the little town of Lowestoft. The vanguard squadron, commanded by John Evertz, lieutenant-admiral of Zealand, and by Stellingwerf, lieutenant-admiral of Friesland, who was one of the first killed, soon gave way and spread disorder among the fleet. Meanwhile Cortenaar, the lieutenant-admiral of the Meuse Admiralty, who was to have taken the command in case of the death of Admiral Obdam, was killed by a round shot at the very beginning of the action, and his son fell at his side a victim to the same fate. Desiring to conceal so fatal a calamity, the master of his ship still kept his flag flying, while the crew yielding to a cowardly panic, seized the command of the vessel from their officers and let her drift away from the enemy. Part of the squadron of the Meuse at once obeyed the signal, and twelve or thirteen ships thus parting from the fleet left it open to attack.

Obdam, who could not foresee this sudden retreat, had made it still more dangerous by a daring manœuvre which only increased the confusion, and whose result proved utterly disastrous. In order to recover advantage of the wind, he had determined to break through the English line, resolved to set fire to the Duke of York's ship as soon as he should be alongside of her. 'Impelled by a passionate desire to engage with the enemy,' wrote De Witt afterwards, 'and being on board a fast sailing ship, he distanced all who were not so swift and who were making every effort to keep up with him, careless if he were followed or no, and at great risk of breaking his own line.'

His audacity almost succeeded. In company with the four best ships in the fleet, he opened a broadside on the Duke of York's vessel. The Duke, closely pressed, showed much personal gallantry, three officers of his staff being killed at his side. Vice-Admiral Lawson and Captain Smith hastened to his assistance and surrounded the Dutch flagship. Her powder magazine took fire, either from a shot or from the carelessness of the crew, and suddenly about three o'clock in the afternoon the ship blew up, exploding into a thousand pieces, while the hull went to the bottom, not one survivor remaining of the five hundred men who had been on board her, and amongst whom were many volunteers belonging to the first families in the United Provinces. While this disaster spread terror amongst the fleet of the republic, two Dutch ships ran into a third, and entangled their rigging so closely with her bowsprit, that two hundred sailors vainly endeavoured to free it with their axes; the English at once despatched a fireship which reduced all three to ashes. The battle was lost, but it was still continued with fury, and the defeat was made glorious by many brilliant exploits.

Lieutenant-Admiral John Evertz, to whom the chief command fell after the deaths of Obdam and Cortenaar, vainly attempted to stem the advance of the victors. He renewed the attack upon the Duke of York's ship, in the defence of which Vice-Admiral Lawson lost his life; but after sustaining the enemy's fire for more than twelve hours, and being no

longer able to keep afloat in a vessel that had been pierced by seventeen shots, he followed the instructions which had been given him for the re-assembling of the fleet, and turned his course towards the Meuse. Most of the captains followed him, although he had not hoisted the admiral's flag, being unable to resign himself to giving the signal to retire. Tromp remained alone with his squadron at his appointed post, although deserted by some of his crews, who mutinied against their captains, forced them to remain inactive under penalty of death, and even surrendered three ships to the English. With a small escort only he retired in good order, covering his retreat by a courageous defence, and resisting the enemy's vanguard until nightfall. He took the route which seemed to him the shortest, although it was the least secure, and arrived the next morning with ten or twelve ships at the Texel, where he found fifty more which had arrived before him.

The conqueror did not know how to profit by his victory, which might have enabled him to destroy the entire fleet of the Republic while it was still dispersed and at his mercy. The States-General had lost nineteen large ships, seven thousand men, of whom two thousand were prisoners, their admiral-in-chief, and three lieutenant-admirals, while the losses of the English were confined to four ships and fifteen hundred men. King Charles II. believing himself to be henceforward lord of the seas, caused a medal to be struck which attributed their empire to him, with these words as a motto: *Et pontus serviet* (the sea also shall obey him). An English nobleman who was then passing through the Hague, did not fear to assert that within two years the ocean would be closed to all Dutch shipping. Peter de Groot, pensionary of Amsterdam, replied only by appealing to the mysterious decrees of Providence. 'The change or ruin of States,' he said to him, 'is a work which depends solely on the will of God, and of which, as Sovereign of the world, He reserves to Himself the disposal.'

The misfortunes of the defeat were aggravated by popular tumults and by the feebleness of military ardour. The lieutenant-admiral, John Evertz, who had only abandoned the

struggle at the last extremity, after distinguishing himself by his indomitable valour, was none the less cruelly ill-used by the populace on his return. As soon as he landed at Brill he was insulted by a furious mob, thrown into one of the canals of the town, and would there have been stoned to death but for the assistance of two deputies of the States, who, happening to be on the spot, summoned the troops to extricate him. He was kept prisoner in a house close by, and guarded closely until he could be conveyed to the Hague at night under an escort. Here he was shut up in prison in order to give an appearance of satisfaction to the popular discontent, and the States-General, after examination, sent him for trial before the court-martial sitting at the Texel; but he offered so complete a vindication that his judges were forced to do justice to his conduct. Even the most intrepid shared in the general discouragement. Tromp resisted the injunctions of the three commissioners from the States, who had been sent to him with instructions to put to sea again with his remaining ships, for the protection of the coasts. He replied 'that he would not expose himself to the loss both of reputation and life in the company of a pack of cowards who had neither courage nor honour,' and he went so far as to threaten to send in his resignation. The sailors, on their side, as soon as they had got back to the Texel, rushed into the boats to go ashore, in spite of their officers, and were only kept on board by the promise of leave to each in turn every week.

The constancy of the States-General was not shaken, and De Witt lost no opportunity of strengthening it. 'I saw M. de Witt immediately after the battle,' wrote D'Estrades to Louis XIV. 'I found him as proud and collected as ever. He told me that he was going to the Texel, by order of the States, to recompense some and punish others, and hoped soon to be able to send the fleet to sea again, adding that they were determined to offer battle a second time.' His courage did not belie his words. On his way to the Texel he saw from the shore some vessels in flight, pursued by the enemy. According to his own account, he at once threw himself into a fishing-boat to overtake them, got on board one without troubling himself

about the leaks of which he was warned, and himself piloted them into port. He was impatient to direct a new naval campaign. He had formerly unwillingly relinquished the idea of accompanying the admiral on board ship, and the disaster to which Obdam had just fallen a victim did not deter him from seeking the post of danger as the most enviable privilege of his office.

The States of Holland had refused until now to consent to his departure, fearing that his absence would leave them without a leader. Even when he had induced them to give their consent he was very nearly obliged to renounce his intention. On the day of the sitting when his commission was to be given to him, he had withdrawn in order not to be obliged to read the resolution in his own praise. His kinsman, Vivien, pensionary of Dordrecht, who took his place as president of the debates, refused to put it to the vote, not choosing to be responsible for the danger which he foresaw, and De Witt was obliged to return to the hall, that he might himself put to the vote the authorisation which would allow him to expose his life in the service of the republic. The consent of the States-General seemed still more difficult to obtain. The deputies of Zealand and Groningen, jealous of the fresh powers that would thus be given to the Grand Pensionary of Holland, were persistent in their opposition. To win their favour, however, De Witt took care to request the appointment of two other commissioners, and this division of authority, which was more apparent than real, enabled him to perform his desired mission. He set out in company with John Boreel, burgomaster of Middleburgh and deputy of Zealand, and Rutger Huygens, deputy of Guelders, an old man of seventy-eight, who had offered himself, in spite of his great age, for this perilous service. The three commissioners, after taking an oath to the States-General, went on board, surrounded by a military retinue. Their staff included two colonels and two lieutenant-colonels, and they had for escort twelve halberdiers, besides a guard of ninety-two sailors; they represented the majesty of the republic, and in order to give full recognition of their authority over the fleet, the States had

put at their disposal the most imposing panoply of command. Their mission was to re-establish discipline. They began by summoning a court-martial to try the captains who had retired without orders, and who had thus contributed to the victory of the enemy. Three were executed and six degraded, while funeral honours were paid with all solemnity to those who had died in the performance of their duty. Two monuments were erected in the great church of the Hague, to perpetuate the memory of the services and the glorious death of Admiral Obdam and Lieutenant-Admiral Cortenaar. But it was not sufficient to punish the guilty and to pay honour to the dead; it was necessary to remedy the disaster by repairing the losses sustained by the United Provinces. The reserve funds were again employed for new armaments, and by a resolution of the States-General the Council of State was charged to apportion among the provinces the contingents towards the sum needed, which amounted to 450,000 florins.

The appointment of a new commander for the fleet was no less urgent. John Evertz, against whom the popular fury had been let loose, could not be chosen. Ruyter had not returned from his distant expedition. Among the rear-admirals Tromp was the only man who could replace Admiral Obdam. He was popular among the sailors, to whom his name was a recommendation, distinguished as it had been by his father in many victories, and his valour justified his renown; but, according to the judgment of a contemporary, 'he was known as a young man with more zeal than discretion;' and besides, his resistance towards the deputies of the States, the protection he had extended to the captains who were put on their trial and his hereditary attachment to the House of Orange, all made him an object of suspicion. The States of Holland, however, and their Grand Pensionary sacrificed their doubts to the necessities of defence. They appointed Tromp to be lieutenant-admiral of the Meuse Admiralty, in place of Cortenaar, and gave him the command of the fleet pending the nomination of an admiral-in-chief. Far from being content with this, Tromp did nothing but loudly complain of the choice of the commissioners sent to him by the States-General, to whose

authority he was by no means disposed to submit. He attributed their selection to De Witt, to whom he proposed, he said, 'to testify his displeasure by exposing him to such dangers as should cure him for ever of his mania for directing campaigns, and would make him repent having come on board his ship.' But the Grand Pensionary was indifferent to these marks of annoyance, and was preparing to lead Tromp to the assistance of the different flotillas returning from Smyrna, the Indies and America, when the news of Ruyter's return restored his confidence.

Ruyter, whose absence was a public calamity, after leaving the African coasts for America, to carry on in the Antilles his warfare against the English colonies, had just entered the Ems and anchored before the fort of Delfzil, three hours' distance from Groningen. He brought back with him nineteen vessels, of which twelve were line-of-battle ships, manned by two thousand sailors, with captures which flattered the national pride, and valuable cargoes which restored prosperity to the commerce of the United Provinces. There had been great anxiety for the fate of Ruyter and his squadron, and the exhibition of the national joy at their happy return was vehement in proportion. The States-General called upon the provincial States to desire thanksgivings to be offered. The inhabitants of Friesland and Groningen crowded the shore and put off in boats to the ship, where Ruyter received them with his usual cordial good humour. Women of the better class embraced him according to the custom of the country. He was received with rejoicings, as the predestined saviour of the republic.

The States of Holland were determined not to let slip the opportunity of using his popularity to insure the success of a new campaign. Even in the preceding month, before any news of the expedition had been received, several members of the Assembly had desired to appoint him admiral-in-chief. As soon as his arrival was announced, the proposal was renewed at the demand of the members for Amsterdam. The States of Holland hastened to follow suit by naming Ruyter lieutenant-admiral-general of the squadrons of their three boards. The same day the States-General offered him the

command-in-chief, under their three commissioners, who requested him to take up his office at once.

Anxious to assist the ships on their way home from the Indies, they did not wait for his arrival to take out the fleet which was bound by contrary winds in the Texel. The energetic determination of the Grand Pensionary of Holland surmounted the obstacles that were opposed to this bold move, and that seemed to make it foolhardy. Putting to use his knowledge of mathematics and relying also upon experiments which confirmed his preconceived ideas, De Witt found, in spite of the contrary opinion of the pilots of that coast, that of thirty-two different points of the compass from which the wind might blow, twenty-eight were favourable to the passage by three channels. He himself too went out to sound the shallows, of which the pilots warned him, and proved to them that, contrary to their allegations, the channel of the Spanjaarts Gat, a mile long, but on account of its breadth the safest, contained sufficient water for the passage of the fleet. Confident in his discovery, he gave the order for departure, and undertook the personal charge of the two largest ships. The others followed easily; and in remembrance of this sally, the Spanjaarts Gat was surnamed John de Witt's channel.

The Grand Pensionary was equally successful in overcoming another difficulty which remained to be conquered. The resolution taken by the States-General to appoint Ruyter commander-in-chief of the naval forces gave satisfaction to all the principal officers; but it offended Tromp, who could not resign himself to the second place, after having been until Ruyter's return in possession of the chief command. Unable to conceal his mortification, Tromp requested the commissioners of the States-General to excuse him from a second campaign 'in which it would be repugnant to him to serve.' They vainly endeavoured to bring him to a better frame of mind; and the States-General to whom they appealed, gave them full powers either to refuse or accept his resignation. The States of Holland on their side showed great displeasure at his conduct, and did not spare him their reproaches. Tromp did not venture to face the public indignation roused against

his personal pretensions, when the interests of the country required their sacrifice, and allowed himself to be gradually brought round. He began by remaining on board, and when Ruyter had rejoined the fleet at sea, he showed himself willing to retain his command. De Witt, who had restored him to his duties by gentleness and firmness combined, might congratulate himself on having thus prevented one of the best of the republic's servants from abandoning her service. The naval force so promptly made ready to put to sea again was divided into four squadrons; the first commanded by Ruyter, the second by Cornelius Evertz, brother of the former lieutenant-admiral, the third by Tromp, and the fourth by the lieutenant-admiral of Friesland, Heddes de Vries. The vice-admirals were Van Nès, Bankert, Van der Helst, and Koerden. Two colonels, Dolman and De Mauregnault, and two lieutenant-colonels, Van Ghent and Van Sauten, had the command of the troops, whose embarkation was watched by De Witt with the most active vigilance. The preparations had been vigorously pushed forward; 93 ships, 12 fireships, 20 galliots, 4,300 guns, and 20,000 men, composed the force assembled by the United Provinces for their defence.

No one could have been more worthy or more capable of command than Ruyter, and the United Provinces had in him the greatest admiral of the century to maintain the honour of their flag upon the ocean. He was born of working-people at Flushing. The son of a brewer's journeyman, he had been the architect of his own fortunes. He began to earn his livelihood by working in a rope-walk, and at eleven years of age went to sea as a cabin-boy. Four years later he transferred his services to the land forces and was sent into the Duchy of Cleves as a gunner under the orders of Prince Maurice. He then again returned to sea as an able-bodied seaman, and rose to being pilot. His first owners, doing justice to the experience he had gained in his distant voyages, sent him several times to Brazil and the Antilles in charge of a vessel which enabled him to trade on his own account. On his returning from these mercantile expeditions he was appointed by the Stadtholder Frederick Henry to the command

of a ship in the States navy, and the first naval combat in which he took part, in an expedition to the coast of Portugal, gave a fair sample of his intrepid courage.

He returned to the merchant navy, but was recalled to the service of the republic during the first war with England, by the States of the province of Zealand, of which he was a native, and the States-General gave him the command of one of their squadrons. After the death of Lieutenant-Admiral Tromp, he was raised to the dignity of Vice-Admiral of the Board of Amsterdam, which he had thought himself bound to accept in answer to the urgent appeals of John de Witt, and he had offered innumerable proofs since then of his untiring devotion. Since peace had been concluded with England, he had been successfully employed in putting down the Barbary pirates, by an unrelenting pursuit of them, and it was to him that the States had at once turned when they resolved to obtain from France, by beginning a system of reprisals, reparation for all the captures made from the mercantile marine of the United Provinces. His share in the northern war—which he had brought to an end by the blockade of the Swedish fleet—and the result of his last expedition to the Guinea Coast, pointed to him as the successor of Lieutenant-Admiral Obdam, he alone seeming to unite every claim to the command of the naval forces of the United Provinces as soon as it became vacant. Thus at forty-eight years of age he arrived at the summit of fortune, and might be said to have the whole fate of the republic committed to his hands, in being thus charged with the naval defence of its threatened independence. During ten successive years, he never failed in this task, and it was on board his own ship, at the moment of victory, that he ended a life that had been exposed in fifty-five engagements, of which fifteen were great battles, a life entirely consecrated to the service of his country.

He united in himself the qualities which make both the great commander and the great citizen. His intrepid courage, which never failed him amidst the most threatening dangers, was enhanced by his coolness and prudence; he had the gifts both of reflection and of decision, the two great virtues

of a commander. His long experience, acquired in his many voyages, and based upon profound knowledge of every portion of the seaman's art, assisted too by an unfailing memory, suggested to him every precaution that could ensure victory. He was inflexible in the maintenance of discipline, but won the love of his sailors by the fatherly interest he showed towards them, and inspired all who served under his orders with his own valiant confidence. He knew how to obey as well as how to command. Submissive to the States his sovereigns, he carried out their instructions with the most scrupulous fidelity, confining himself to the exercise of his powers as admiral, and never pretending to any share in politics. He sought in the privileges of his office no other satisfaction than that of the fulfilment of a great duty to his country. He had never solicited it, was incapable of any meanness for the sake of retaining it, and proved himself later on disposed to retire from it that he might remain true to those whose fortunes he desired to share. Such high qualities made him peculiarly fitted for the service of a republic, and justified the confiding friendship which never ceased to unite De Witt to Ruyter.

He had never been dazzled by grandeur. Averse from all flattery, he disliked luxury, and when not at sea cared only for family life. His simple habits were encouraged by a piety as sincere as it was tolerant. He attributed to God all his successes. 'I never,' says a contemporary, 'saw him other than himself, and when victory declared in his favour he always said: "It is given us by God."' He studied the Scriptures assiduously, and during his winter evenings on shore he used to read them to his wife and children as they sat round the family table. In the Divine services held daily on board he always led the chanting of the Psalms, 'taking much pleasure in singing,' as Brandt the historian naïvely tells us, 'both for the edification of those who listened and because he could sing well.'

His portraits represent him with all the external appearance of health and strength. Of medium height but good figure, with a broad forehead, a ruddy complexion, black and rather

prominent eyes full of fire, a thick, pointed moustache, his grave yet gentle countenance stamped with candour and honesty shows us the very type of a seaman, such as he appeared to the admiration of contemporaries and the respect of posterity.

De Witt was worthy to share with him the community of peril and glory. On the eve of the new campaign now about to commence, he determined to remain on board the fleet with the two other commissioners of the States. He had gone on board from doubts of the political fidelity and the military prudence of Tromp; but when Tromp was replaced in the chief command by Ruyter, who offered every security to the Grand Pensionary, his friends urgently advised him not to absent himself, in the fear that the Orange party might profit by his departure to resume possession of the government. De Witt however, opposed to them an immovable determination. 'He is preparing for the voyage,' writes one of the correspondents of the French Court, 'and so arranging his private affairs that death may have no fears for him, and that where the service of the State is concerned he may not have to consider his many children, who are all still young, nor the approaching confinement of his wife. He has but one anxiety, that of being unjustly suspected of desiring by absence to escape the resentment of his enemies and the hostility of the populace.' He himself wrote to Van Beuningen, November 19, 1664: 'I do not doubt that the rumours set afloat by the English and some other persons, that odious reasons of fear had induced me to embark on the States fleet, have died a natural death.'

The fate of his own person and of his authority seemed to him bound up with the safety of the State, which depended upon the success of the war. 'A second naval battle,' he wrote, 'will either strengthen or ruin at a blow both one and the other.' The motives which justified his conduct are expressed in the most noble sentiments in a private letter which he wrote to his sister-in-law, the wife of Cornelius de Witt, whose strength of character deserved the confidence he reposed in her. 'I have always supposed that you had so much

courage and strength of mind, that I could not expect from you such tender anxiety as you manifest at the end of your letter. My determination to take part in the expedition is based upon absolute necessity. Those who have not been eye-witnesses will perhaps refuse to believe that a naval force of some 20,000 men, commanded by officers who have studied their art from infancy, should contain no one capable of leading and directing it. There is urgent necessity to remedy this, and to endeavour to infuse new life, so to speak, into this force. To attain this object the presence of commissioners has been judged needful to guide the counsels of the leaders which might otherwise be contradictory, and restore confidence to the sailors by means of persuasion. It was necessary that choice should be made of a representative of the States-General whose influence would be sufficient to make his opinion preponderate. As most of the deputies of Holland have agreed upon this point it is only reasonable that near relations, whose too great affection prevents their seeing so clearly as indifferent persons, should submit to that decision and calm their excessive apprehensions. They must soothe themselves with the thought that if our Lord God will bless the undertaking the liberty of the country will be confirmed. With this object, we should without fear venture to hazard ourselves, our lives, our goods, and our blood, and if your fears can in any degree be allayed by my honest confidence, I can in all sincerity assure you that during my presence here no gloomy thought has ever harassed my mind.'

His patriotic self-devotion did not suffice to disarm his adversaries. 'I had some trouble to keep myself from laughing at the sight of a lawyer convinced that he can restore courage to panic-stricken people,' writes Count de Guiche in his Memoirs, 'and that with a smaller number of ships he can by his own merits win a battle against a victorious fleet in all respects superior to his own. There is in this a really uncommon excess of presumption.' Elsewhere the same writer continues: 'The Grand Pensionary caused it to be said by his agents that the Romans had taken men from the plough to command their armies. The most modest of his servitors

compared him to the Venetian nobles, and for his own part, he thought himself capable of any warlike deeds, and went so far as to change even his style of dress, and wear a doublet covered with gold lace and an embroidered sword-belt from which hung a long sword.' We recognise in this disdainful and mocking tone the feelings of the great noble and courtier who cannot forgive a mere citizen for usurping to a certain extent those military virtues of which the nobility claim the monopoly. It did not hinder De Witt from proving himself worthy to take his place in that choice company of the great men of Athens and of Rome whose lives belonged entirely to their country, and whose services shed such lustre over the republics of antiquity.

The Grand Pensionary justified his presence with the fleet by the promptitude with which he had it equipped and sent to sea. He was eager to send it to meet the ships returning from the East Indies, which had rallied round them all the merchant convoys of the Mediterranean. The loss of these sixty-seven vessels, with their cargo of a hundred-and-twenty tons of gold, would have been an irreparable disaster to the republic. They were forced to go out of their course to escape the enemy's cruisers, and were very near being surprised in the port of Bergen in Norway, the governor of which was vainly called upon to deliver them up. The English squadron attacked them here, but was repulsed by the guns from the town. Even then they would have had to pay the ransom of a hundred thousand crowns demanded by the governor, if the fleet from the Texel had not arrived in time to release them and serve as an escort. Their hopes of a safe return were in part destroyed by the storm which overtook them on September 8 and 9, 1665. The north-easterly gale blew with such fury that before it was possible to come up with the enemy the fleet of the States-General were scattered, notwithstanding the efforts of Ruyter and John de Witt to rally them. The Grand Pensionary was on board an old craft, and, careless of danger, he never left the tiller so long as the storm lasted, that he might direct the signals. But hardly forty vessels remained in position, and while the dispersed squadron slowly

collected again, the English fleet had drawn off, content with the prizes they had picked up during the gale; five line-of-battle ships and seven merchantmen, of which three India ships were valued at four millions, had fallen into their hands. Fresh losses thus unhappily took the place of the hoped-for victory.

The Grand Pensionary opposed an unalterable serenity of mind to all the assaults of an adverse fortune; he humbled himself before the shock of calamity, but he was not discouraged. His report to the States-General of the disasters they had sustained was as follows:—'We know that people will cry out at pain; and we accordingly foresee that we shall not be exempt from calumnies and unjust accusations, but we must hope that their High Mightinesses, considering all that we have done, may take into account that this is really a fatality which has come upon us from the hand of God, and that there has been no negligence on our part. It pleased God to make use of the wind, that inconstant element, to disperse our fleet, in such manner that we can only say what is always in our hearts—man proposes but God disposes. We hope, however, that this same God will give proofs of His mercy and of His goodwill to this nation in some other encounter of greater importance, and He will thus show that if He strikes with one hand He heals with the other according to His good pleasure.'

Thus supported by his patriotism and by his Christian faith, De Witt had no other thought than that of making new efforts to force an engagement which should allow the republic to make some profit from her naval forces. It having been proposed that the ships should be recalled into harbour and dismantled on account of the already advanced season, he wrote thus to Vivien, the pensionary of Dordrecht, who had taken his place in the assembly of the States of Holland: 'I think that if it had pleased God to bring safely into harbour the men-of-war and the India ships, the States might without prejudice to the public welfare, and without compromising its own reputation, resolve to dismantle them. But since the Providence of God has ordered matters otherwise, I am

of opinion that it will be more advantageous, and more honourable to the States, to make another effort before the English have had time to reinforce their fleet, by means of the riches they have taken from the subjects of the States and the men-of-war they have captured. My advice is consequently that we should put to sea at once, to look for them again, and I think that with so fine a naval force, there is everything to be hoped for by God's blessing.'

His advice was adopted by the States. The fleet, which had reassembled at Goeree, received orders to sail for England. Unable, by reason of contrary winds, to attempt an attack on the fireships and the men-of-war at anchor in the Downs, it proceeded to blockade the mouth of the Thames. The Grand Pensionary on his galliot made a careful exploration of the river, which he turned to account two years later, to insure the glorious success of a new campaign. Sixty of the enemy's ships were at anchor in the river, and according to the most probable expectations would endeavour to force their way out at any price, so as to reopen the Thames for navigation; but the suppositions of the Grand Pensionary were overthrown by their inaction. Attacked by the plague which was decimating London, the English fleet had suffered too much to venture upon a battle; and that of the States, after vainly defying it, was forced by sickness and bad weather to return to harbour. De Witt and his two colleagues sent in their report to the States-General and received solemn thanks in return. On the same day the Grand Pensionary gave an account of his mission to the States of Holland, who had already sent him encouraging messages, and who renewed to him the assurance of their satisfaction. The most flattering praise that he received was that of Ruyter. When the admiral who shared John de Witt's title to the public gratitude appeared in turn at the bar of the two assemblies, to be congratulated upon his services, he declared 'that in all the deliberations of the councils of war in which the Grand Pensionary had taken part, he had always received from him the most useful aid, and that he cordially acknowledged his rare sagacity.' He made a point also of openly showing the attachment he professed for him, by

passing in his house the time of his sojourn at the Hague. De Witt might well glory in the witness to his conduct offered by such a judge. Content with having satisfied his employers, he refused all recompense, declaring 'that he had not undertaken his expedition with a view to receiving presents, but to acquit himself of his duty, and to serve his beloved country, for which he was always ready to make any sacrifice.' By taking the fleet to sea again, in spite of defeats and storms, De Witt had retrieved the honour of the flag, and strengthened public confidence. And he did justice to himself when he wrote to Van Beuningen: 'Although it has not pleased Heaven to bestow every blessing that we could have wished upon the employment of the fleet, I am, nevertheless, persuaded that my presence was not useless, especially in preventing its return in disorder and short of provisions after having been defeated and dispersed by the storm.' If it had not been able to regain the victory, it had at least repaired the humiliation of defeat.

While the republic was thus struggling with the formidable trials of a maritime war that exhausted her resources, she was still more dangerously menaced in her independence by the aggression of one of her neighbours, the Bishop of Münster. By allying himself with him to attack the United Provinces, Charles II. had created a diversion which might put them at his mercy.

Bernard Van Galen, Bishop of Münster, who ruled his states for twenty-eight years, dying at the age of 71, in 1678, continued in the middle of the seventeenth century the traditions of the warrior-prelates of the Middle Ages. In times of peace, he fulfilled with regularity the duties of his ecclesiastical office, and administered his diocese with paternal care, proving himself, according to Johannes ab Alpen, one of his former ministers and his biographer, an equitable, humane, affable, and merciful prince. But having passed his youth in the military service of the Elector of Cologne, he had never renounced his first vocation, and seemed better fitted to bear a sword than a crosier. As soon as he found himself in the field, he resumed the manners of the

camp, and passed a portion of his days in joyous banqueting. Joining to the resources of a singularly subtle mind an obstinate determination of character, he was always ready to parade the turbulent ambition which made him a stranger to all scruple. Full of confidence in himself, he wished, he said, to make plenty of noise in the world before leaving it, and declared that if he ever came to lose his states, he should not think himself in any the worse condition, having money enough in the bank at Venice to buy a cardinal's hat.

It was at the expense of the United Provinces that he proposed to increase his principality. The States-General had repeatedly provoked his resentment, without having been able to reduce him to the impossibility of harming them. Eight years before they had undertaken to assist the town of Münster, which refused to acknowledge his authority and claimed the privileges of a free city. On the energetic representations of John de Witt, they had assembled a body of troops consisting of about 7,000 men, whose despatch was held in suspense by the opposition of Amsterdam, while the bishop, warned in time, pressed forward the conclusion of an agreement which made all preparations for intervention unnecessary. New disputes had given him pretexts for complaint. The States refused to recognise his pretensions to the lordship of Borkelo, which belonged to the province of Guelders. They had besides taken part against him in favour of George Christian, Prince of East Friesland, within whose territories they occupied the strongholds of Liroort and Emden, as advanced posts to the town of Groningen. The Bishop of Münster having taken possession of the town of Deyl, or Eydeler, in this principality, which secured him free access to the United Provinces, they gave the command of an expedition to Prince William Frederick of Nassau, who easily succeeded in retaking it.

The following year the bishop signed the preliminaries of a secret treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with Charles II. As soon as he had received the considerable subsidies promised to him, he sent to demand from the States-General reparation for the injuries of which he complained

and, without waiting for the return of his envoy from the Hague, gave orders to his troops to invade the territory of the United Provinces.

He had mustered, in the course of two months, 8,000 horse and nearly 5,000 foot, with a considerable body of artillery. Further reinforcements soon raised his army to 18,000 men. He sought to ensure success by the rapidity of his attack. A few weeks sufficed to put him in possession of the county of Zutphen, and of a part of the province of Overijssel. With the exception of the fortress of Borkelo, which held out for some days under the command of an ensign named Eck, all the towns surrendered before any measures could be taken to assist them. The States had reason to fear that the enemy's army might hasten its march without meeting with any obstacle. But it divided into two detachments, and the vigour of the attack was thus diminished. Confiding in the hopes held out to him by Schulemburg, a former deputy of the States of Groningen, who had recently been condemned as a traitor after some political disturbances which had occurred in the province, and persuaded that Schulemburg would cause the gates of Groningen to be opened to him, the bishop sent a part of his forces in the direction of that town. He hoped to surprise the fortress of Delfzyl with the help of a descent by the English, and thus to complete the rapid success of his expedition. 'The Batavian lion, it was said, was allowing itself to be defeated by a sheep, when one stroke of a paw was all that was needed to ensure success.'

The military forces which the States could oppose to the invasion were insufficient. Their army had been imprudently reduced to 24,000 men; the new levies which they had decreed had not yet been completed; their best soldiers, to the number of about 7,000, formed part of the marine forces with the fleet, and they had hardly more than 6,000 men to put into the field. Besides, the fortifications of the frontier towns had not been repaired, the magazines and arsenals were empty, and finally, the suppression of a great number of commissions and the vacancy in the chief command had disorganised the army. The States-General had not contented themselves

with leaving the companies without lieutenants, refusing all new appointments; they had not even replaced Major-General Brederode, who had now been dead ten years, the States of Holland having refused to allow a successor to him to be named. Cavalry, artillery, and infantry, henceforth were under the orders of chiefs who were no longer dependent upon any military authority, and who were themselves reduced to an inferior position. All military powers had been vested in the Council of State. 'They are so jealous of their authority and of their title of sovereign,' wrote D'Estrades, 'that they appear to prefer to sustain very considerable damage, and themselves perform the part of commander-in-chief, rather than allow those to act who are capable of doing so. The States of Holland had too easily sacrificed to their political fears the imperious necessities of defence. De Witt recognised the danger, and spoke of it in the following terms: 'The bad opinion entertained of the land forces of this State is not without foundation, and I own to you that to my mind it cannot be employed in great operations; but if the projects that I have made to remedy these evils can be put into execution, I do not doubt of success in restoring it to a satisfactory condition.'

To repair former errors it was necessary at least to proceed without delay to the choice of a commander-in-chief. William Frederick of Nassau, stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, and grand master of the artillery, who had commanded the last expedition against the Bishop of Münster, was dead. Louis of Nassau, Lord of Beverwaert, chief of the staff, who possessed the confidence of the States of Holland, followed him to the grave a few months later. There remained for choice only two general officers, the Rhyngrave Frederick Magnus of Salm, governor of Maestricht, commissary-general of cavalry; and Prince John Maurice of Nassau-Siegen, formerly governor of Brazil, stadtholder of Cleves for the Elector of Brandenburg, commandant of Wesel, and lieutenant-general of cavalry.

The States of Holland were suspicious of the latter both in his engagements with the Elector and his relationship to the

House of Orange, and also objected to his great age. They would have liked to put forward the Prince of Tarentum, colonel of a regiment of horse, whom they had just appointed governor of Bois-le-Duc. But the other provinces had all declared in favour of Prince John Maurice, whose long services they desired to recompense, and they refused to allow the House of Orange to be deprived of the command of the troops. The States of Holland, driven by necessity, gave their consent, but required that the powers entrusted to the Prince should be limited to the duration of the expedition. He entered upon his office at once, with a salary of 2,400 crowns annually for his equipage and of twelve florins a week for his table. The Rhyngrave had the command of the cavalry. 'The honour done to me,' he wrote to the Grand Pensionary of Holland, 'is due only to you and your good counsel, to which I shall be indebted all my life. I hope with God's help I shall acquit myself worthily, and that you will never be ashamed of having recommended him who is till death your very humble and very faithful servant.'

The States-General, making use of the powers which belonged to them, sent five deputies from their assembly to represent them at headquarters, and John de Witt, being unable to accompany them on account of his mission to the fleet, took care that his brother, Cornelius de Witt, councillor deputy of Holland, should be appointed as one of the commissioners. The attacks upon them, to which Count de Guiche has given free vent in his Memoirs, show plainly a fixed intention in his haughty disparagement of the representatives of civil power thus transformed into military delegates. His usual one-sidedness surpasses even itself in the account which represents Cornelius de Witt 'led into the trenches by the Prince of Nassau, who exposed him to the fire of the guns while conversing with the most perfect coolness, whereas the former suddenly left his company, and so made the lookers-on laugh greatly.' The proofs of intrepid valour by which Cornelius de Witt distinguished himself in his naval campaigns, and which are testified to by all his contemporaries, take away all sting from such audacious accusations.

The States took measures, though tardily, to supply the deficiencies of their defensive preparations. The new levies which they had ordered were raised and reinforced by 6,000 waartgelders or militia, enrolled by the States of Overijssel. The guns of the towns were sent into camp. Steps were taken for repairing the fortresses and supplying the arsenals. The States of Holland had besides, in the month of July, proposed to the States-General to subsidise for the service of the republic the troops offered to them by the princes of the house of Brunswick-Luneburg—George William, Duke of Zell, and his brother Ernest Augustus, Bishop of Osnabruck. The conditions of this agreement were arranged with the States-General through the means of their envoy Count Waldeck, who had served the States as a captain of horse, and who, 'having a high opinion of himself,' flattered himself that he might one day receive the command of the military forces of the republic. For the sum of 140,000 florins down, and subsidies of 11,112 florins per month, a contingent of twelve thousand men was promised.

But the money to obtain this was wanting. Preparations for the new naval campaign absorbed the already strained resources. Zealand, whose maritime trade was ruined by the war, found it impossible to pay her financial quota. Guelders, Overijssel, and the provinces of Friesland and Groningen, overrun and devastated by the Bishop of Münster's army, were reduced to straits which brought them to the very verge of insolvency. Holland, obliged to support almost unaided the burden of taxes and loans, 'could not,' wrote D'Estrades, 'continue for a year thus weighted, without bringing about a revolution that would change the government. If in such a conjuncture one or two towns should declare that they would contribute no longer towards the financial burdens, we might look for changes, since they would inevitably be upheld by members of the States who were known to be unfriendly to M. de Witt.' 'The State is so overburdened with expenses,' the Grand Pensionary himself confesses, 'that we cannot meet them, however much we may promise; it is to be feared that some of the troops newly levied may desert for want of pay. The

same thing is to be feared for the Luxemburg forces.' The United Provinces were therefore placed under the impossibility of providing for their defence themselves.

In this situation the republic could not dispense with the aid of France, which had been assured to her by the last treaty of alliance, according to which 12,000 men were to be furnished to the States in case they were attacked. Up to this time Louis XIV. had been procrastinating, notwithstanding the urgent representations of Van Beuningen, the ambassador of the United Provinces in Paris. He had contented himself with renewing his proposals of peace in London, and with threatening the Bishop of Münster with his intervention. But the death of the King of Spain, which he had been long awaiting, imposed upon him the necessity of showing some consideration for the United Provinces, in order to deter them from an alliance with England, which might put obstacles in the way of the execution of his projects with regard to the Spanish Netherlands. De Witt had skilfully contrived to rouse the French king's fears of such a reconciliation, by causing negotiations to be resumed by Van Gogh, the ambassador of the States, who had remained in London. 'I have declared to Count D'Estrades,' he wrote to Van Beuningen, 'that if the king does not speedily put matters straight, I shall be able no longer to find fault with those who believe that we should purchase peace with England at any price.'

Interested in the prolongation of the war so that the United Provinces and England, by remaining in hostility, should leave Spain open to his attack, Louis XIV. readily recognised that he could not avoid assisting the republic, in order to re-establish the equilibrium between the belligerent powers. But, unwilling to depart more than was necessary from a system of neutrality so advantageous to his interests, he contented himself with intervening merely against the Bishop of Münster, thus limiting the assistance which he gave to the States and taking care besides to render it more apparent than real.

A body of 6,000 men was sent into the field, under the command of Lieutenant-General Pradel, governor of Bapaume.

He marched by short stages along the frontiers of the Spanish Netherlands as far as Maestricht, where he was received by the deputies of the States. The hopes of co-operation which this intervention might have raised in the republic soon vanished one after another. The French cavalry, which included two companies of the king's musqueteers, was indeed a picked body; but the infantry, consisting of 4,000 men, was a mere military mob. They were as badly armed as they were ill-clothed, and the States-General was obliged to buy for them '4,000 pairs of shoes and 4,000 pairs of stockings.' Discipline was equally wanting. According to the report of the commissary of the army the musqueteers themselves, though belonging to the aristocracy of the kingdom, set the example of disorder and violence. Convoys pillaged and their drivers ill-used, cattle carried off, houses burnt, the exercise of the Calvinist form of worship insulted: such were the traces left by the passage of the French soldiers. 'They paid nothing as they passed, or false money,' writes Sir William Temple to the English Government, 'took the best treatment the Dutch could make them with scorn and insolence, and drank his Majesty's and the Prince of Münster's health in the market-place at Maestricht; a strain, I suppose, of their extravagance, rather than good meaning.' They behaved in an ally's country as they would have done in an enemy's. The junction of the French auxiliary corps with the troops of the republic at Arnheim only made the disappointment more complete. The mistakes made by the bishop seemed, however, as if they must ensure the speedy success of the campaign and allow the time lost to be retrieved. The attempt of his lieutenant, D'Ossery, against Groningen had failed. Protected against all surprise by a garrison of 4,000 men, the town had valiantly defended itself. The Princess of Nassau, Albertina Agnes, widow of William Frederick, the last stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, had shut herself up here with her young son, Henry Casimir, to encourage the resistance of the inhabitants. The detachment of the episcopal army which had advanced to the attack of the town allowed its communications to be cut with the main force which had

invaded Overijssel. Fearing to be surrounded, D'Ossery entrenched himself in a strong position at Winschoten, near the mouth of the river Ems. In order to release him, the bishop moved to Meppen and employed four or five thousand peasants to construct across the swamps a dyke two leagues in length, which was finished in six weeks, and bears his name to this day.

To destroy this vanguard of the bishop's army it was only necessary to attack it before it could be reinforced. But the 15,000 men whom the arrival of the French troops permitted to be used against him, and who might easily have been marched across the enemy's country in the absence of his army, remained inactive. The French commander, Pradel, no doubt in obedience to secret instructions given him by Louis XIV., alleged the insufficiency of his camp equipment and the lateness of the season, in opposition to the continuance of the expedition, and required that the troops should be dismissed to their winter quarters. His resistance only increased the indecision of Prince John Maurice, who 'from weakness and too easy compliance,' writes John de Witt, 'did not get beyond deliberations.'

The States commissioners, after vainly reiterating their complaints and remonstrances for three weeks, finally obtained orders that the allied forces should quit their cantonments and should be marched to the further side of the Yssel. But the dilatoriness of their movements, increased by the bad state of the roads, rendered the expedition useless. The sole result of the campaign for the States-General was the submission of the little town of Lockhein, which was only defended by 400 foot-soldiers, and which capitulated, once the trenches were opened, after three days' resistance. To secure Pradel's consent to this operation, Prince John Maurice went so far as to assure him that the States would be content with this proof of his complaisance. Pradel, accordingly, insisting upon the want of forage, imperiously demanded that the order for retreat should be given, and the commissioners of the States were obliged to withdraw the army, while the bishop's cavalry scoured the neighbourhood unmolested.

The expedition was postponed until after the winter, and the troops returned to their garrison. The invasion had hardly been checked, and instead of being freed from it the States-General had reason to fear that it would soon resume its course. The deputies hastened to report the result of their mission to the States-General, and Prince John Maurice was also called upon to give an account of his campaign. In his report, which was drawn up carefully, he haughtily repelled the reproaches addressed to him, appealing for his justification to the judgment of his officers, and blaming the improvidence of the States with regard to the military stores. The States of Holland and their Grand Pensionary did not conceal from him their dissatisfaction; but the other provinces insisted that the command should be continued to him, and even obtained for him a vote of thanks.

Instead of drawing closer the good relations between France and the republic, this campaign had displeased and disquieted the United Provinces. The States had been brought to desire the recall of the French troops as impatiently as they had looked for their arrival. The correspondence of Count D'Estrades explains only too well the fears their presence excited, when it is seen that he proposed to Louis XIV. to profit by their presence, in order to secure the provinces of Friesland and Groningen by seizing the stronghold of Coeverden. 'It would thus be possible,' he wrote, foreseeing the opposition that the States would make to the projects of the King of France against the Spanish Netherlands, 'to assist those who should declare in our favour when the event occurs, and bring Holland to reason if she should deviate from her duty.' Hoping, however, to make the republic dependent upon France without so audacious a violation of the rights of nations, Lionne urged D'Estrades to negotiate for the acquisition of Maestricht, or at least for the occupation of Wesel. He went so far as to advise him to obtain the command of the troops belonging to the States. Such were the fears aroused that a project of introducing French garrisons into the towns of Holland, improbable as it was, having been attributed to John de Witt, one of his father's

most faithful friends represented to him that by putting it into execution he would run the risk of sharing the fate of Olden Barneveldt.

The tardy declaration of the King of France in favour of the United Provinces against England, did not dissipate these anxieties, but rather helped to justify them. Louis XIV. had delayed it until now; he permitted it at last, from fear of discouraging the States by further delays, and thus of disposing them to receive the offers of mediation sent by the Emperor of Germany to the Hague. The States, on their side, in order to reassure him, recalled their ambassador, Van Gogh, from London, and pledged themselves to receive no proposals from Charles II. without giving information to the ambassador of France. While they showed themselves resolved to adhere strictly to their promise, Louis, less scrupulous, continued his negotiations with the envoys of Charles at the house of the Queen-Dowager of England at Chaillot; but he was disappointed in his expectations, and they were broken off after a few weeks of useless conferences.

The question now was how to bring about a junction of the French fleet with that of the States. The King of France had announced the despatch of a squadron of thirty sail, commanded by his admiral, the Duke de Beaufort; but he refused to give any assurance for the reciprocal saluting of the flags. According to the regulation which he had ordered, but had not ventured to publish, Louis required that the admiral of the States should be obliged to salute not only the admiral of France, but also the vice-admiral and rear-admiral of the French squadron. He claimed also that the chief command should be given to the admiral of France alone, while the States-General required that the two admirals should be associated together. 'It is impossible to pledge ourselves,' wrote De Witt to Van Beuningen, 'to obey exclusively the signals of the admiral of France, who has never yet been in any naval battle, and that especially in a decisive engagement on which depends the safety or ruin of the republic.'

Even when the agreement had been with difficulty concluded, the States were condemned to a delay of many months

before the arrival of the French fleet. The Duke de Beaufort, who ought to have put to sea in February to join the ships being equipped by the King of France in the Atlantic ports, remained in the Toulon roads until the month of April. He stopped at Lisbon, and only took his departure thence at the end of the summer to rejoin the Dutch fleet, never, however, advancing beyond La Rochelle. 'If he is to remain in the Tagus until he has received fresh orders from the King,' wrote the Grand Pensionary to Van Beuningen, 'I foresee with sorrow that he will not be of much help to us. And I cannot disguise from you that the conduct of the French court is subjected to much comment here.' Van Beuningen, on his side, ceased not to complain vehemently 'that the declaration of war had been only upon paper, as the King of France had only sent out his fleet to amuse itself, and had never intended that it should rejoin that of the States.' Far from defending himself from these accusations, Louis XIV. took pride in them, and in the following year he desired De Ruigny, his ambassador in London, to let the King of England know 'that he did not think that Charles II. could desire other results from his friendship than those he had in every way shown him during the said war.'

^ However this might be, the French alliance was not without use to the United Provinces, notwithstanding the insufficient assistance of which they had a right to complain. It prevented them from being crushed, and favoured the success of their negotiations with other powers which put an end to their political isolation. The States-General had reason to fear the hostility of Sweden, which had not forgiven their recent intervention in favour of Denmark. The commercial concessions which they desired their envoy, Ysbrandt, to offer to the Swedish Government contributed to deter it from an offensive alliance with England, and the representations of the French ambassador, the Marquis de Pomponne, induced them to engage not to promote any interests contrary to those of France. The alliance of Denmark seemed more easy to obtain, notwithstanding the ill-will of King Frederick III. who was related to the King of England, and who, forgetful of the services he owed to

the United Provinces, seemed disposed to seek new protectors. The cordial advances of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, the negotiations of Amerongen (the envoy of the republic), and the pecuniary satisfaction which the States-General consented to grant to the amount of 1,800,000 crowns, helped to the conclusion of a treaty which was at last signed at the Hague. The secret articles attached to it stipulated for an alliance offensive and defensive between Denmark and the States-General, by the terms of which forty ships were to be put at the disposal of the United Provinces.

Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg, followed this example. The neighbourhood of the French troops despatched against the Bishop of Münster gave him some uneasiness. He feared that the States, if driven to extremities, might give up to France the town of Wesel, situated in his duchy of Cleves, which he had never ceased to reclaim. His hostility to the Grand Pensionary seemed, moreover, to place an insurmountable obstacle in the way of any attempt at an understanding. He had gone so far as to write that he could not consent to leave the education of the young prince to the States of Holland, because his nephew's life would not be secure in the hands of John de Witt. He had even attempted to intimidate him by threats of the same ill-treatment and disgrace as one of his predecessors had formerly suffered. But German interests, of which he never lost sight, made him anxious for an agreement, to which the States lent themselves by the settlement of their pecuniary differences with him. The latter related to a sum of 100,000 crowns lent by the States to one of the ancestors of the Elector, which with interest now amounted to 1,200,000. His desire for a good understanding was such that he proposed to visit the Hague, that he might there converse with the Grand Pensionary, and place himself in relations of confidential friendship with him. By the treaty which was shortly concluded, February 16th, 1666, satisfied with having obtained from the States 200,000 florins in ready money, and subsidies of pay amounting to more than 50,000 florins a month, the Elector promised them a contingent of 12,000 men.

The United Provinces gained by this treaty something more than the assistance of a powerful neighbour. Once become the allies of the Elector of Brandenburg they could make sure of the intervention of the Princes of Brunswick-Luneburg, who did not dare to assist them so long as Frederick William had not declared himself in their favour. The States thus found themselves in a position not merely to repulse the attack of the Bishop of Münster, but also to force him to make peace. This was signed at Cleves on April 18, 1666, within the dominions of the Elector of Brandenburg, and it was to Beverningh's conduct of the negotiations that they owed their prompt success. The bishop undertook to maintain not more than 3,000 men for the security of his principality, to restore all the towns he had taken, and to break the convention by which he had pledged himself to give his assistance to the King of England against the republic.

Six months later, these various treaties were completed and confirmed by a definitive league concluded at the Hague between the States-General, the King of Denmark, the Elector of Brandenburg, and the Princes of the House of Brunswick-Luneburg. This quadruple alliance assured to the States, in consideration of a reciprocal engagement on their part, a further contingent of 10,800 men, and bound the contracting parties to assist each other with all their forces, during a period of ten years, in case of any fresh attack. It relieved the United Provinces from dependence for defence upon the mercy of France, who would have liked to remain their sole protector so as to be able with greater ease to dictate to them. Diplomacy thus repaired the disappointments and disasters of the war, by negotiations whose success was assured by the foreign policy of the Grand Pensionary of Holland.

The naval war against England might now be renewed under more favourable auspices, and in order to pave the way to its fortunate issue, the States-General, having left no allies to Charles II., prepared to seek enemies for him even in his own kingdom. As early as the month of May 1665 the project of a descent upon Ireland had been mooted in the Council of Dordrecht. Reports had been submitted stating

the chances of a rising. Arms were demanded for 7,000 foot and 3,000 horse, and it was shown with what facility the most important towns such as Limerick and Cork might be surprised. At the same time measures were proposed for inciting to a rebellion in Scotland, by taking advantage of the community of religious belief and commercial interests which bound Scotland to the United Provinces. De Witt, who had secured secret intelligences in that country, called for the prompt co-operation of the King of France, that the signal for a rising might be given. With this object Louis XIV. kept up communications with two of the chiefs of the republican party, Algernon Sidney and Ludlow, but made no haste to profit by the offers which they made to him.

In spite of his procrastinating counsels, the States-General were eager to despatch their fleet. By leaving it inactive the Grand Pensionary feared not merely to provoke popular discontent and to dishearten the crews, but also to give the English time to put to sea with a new squadron. In a long and weighty report he exposed to the ambassador of France the political and maritime considerations which forbade any delay in the naval operations. He repaired to the Texel, accompanied by several deputies of the States-General, in order to hasten the final preparations for departure. To spur on Count D'Estrades to demand the speedy arrival of the French squadron, he expatiated on the number and good order of the ships, as well as on the spirit both of officers and crews—'as gay as if they were going to a wedding.' 'Everything is just as we could wish it,' he wrote to the French ambassador, 'so that nothing remains but to pray God that he will be pleased to facilitate the junction of the allied fleets, and to bestow upon us His blessing in battle.'

The fleet set sail in the beginning of June under the command of Ruyter. The Admiral-in-chief was on board the 'Seven Provinces,' a ship which had been built by the Admiralty of Rotterdam, and which carried the red flag of the States-General on which was represented the Batavian lion. Three squadrons were united under his orders. He retained for himself the command of the first, that of the

Admiralty of the Meuse, with Lieutenant-Admiral Van Nès as his second in command. The second squadron was under the orders of the lieutenant-admirals of Friesland and Zealand, Cornelius Evertz and Hiddes de Vries. The third, composed of the ships of the admiralties of Amsterdam and of North Holland, had Tromp and Meppel for lieutenant-admirals. The fleet, whose equipment cost the United Provinces 5,800,000 florins annually, consisted of a hundred sail, of which seventy-two were line-of-battle ships; they carried 4,700 guns, the efficiency of which had lately been greatly increased by the invention of chain-shot, due to John de Witt, and they were manned by 22,000 men, including both sailors and soldiers.

The English fleet, of about equal strength, had fewer ships and more men. The command had been entrusted to Monk and Prince Rupert. It was similarly divided into three squadrons: that of the Red, the White, and the Blue, under the respective orders of Monk, Admiral Askew, and Admiral Allen. A flying squadron of twenty ships had been deputed, under Prince Rupert's orders, to watch the movements of the French fleet, if the latter should attempt a junction with that of the States. Monk, who wished to reserve to himself the honours of victories, had been careful thus to dismiss a rival to his glory, at the risk of weakening the naval force at his disposal.

Friday, June 11, 1666, the two fleets met off the Downs. That of the republic was at anchor, wind and tide being contrary. At the first approach of the enemy they cut their cables, and at one o'clock in the afternoon the attack began on both sides with equal determination. The third squadron, which was to have formed the rear, owing to the direction of the wind became the van, and took the largest share of the fighting. Tromp, whose ship had been struck by a red-hot shot, which set fire to his stern gallery, told off half his crew to extinguish the flames, without ceasing to follow up the enemy with his usual intrepidity; but having unfortunately come into collision with a Dutch vessel, he lost his masts, and was obliged to remove to another ship, on board of which he continued the

battle until five in the afternoon. At that hour, owing to an imprudent movement, the English fleet was obliged to tack, and thus threw into his hands with another ship that of the vice-admiral of the White, Admiral Barklay, the Duke of York's brother-in-law, who had been struck by a musket-ball after making a valiant defence, and left only his dead body to those who boarded and seized his ship. Ruyter, on his side, had been engaged with Monk. The two admirals had obstinately sought each other out, but had not long remained within range of one another. Monk, having lost his mainmast, was forced to withdraw, while Ruyter was repelling the attack of a seventy-gun ship, which he finally sank. Two French volunteers who had made a point of assisting in this naval engagement under his orders, Count de Guiche and the Prince of Monaco, did honour to France by their valour. They had embarked on board Captain Terlon's ship which caught fire and was in danger of sinking, and were preparing to leave it by throwing themselves into the sea, when another ship came within reach, on board which they were able to jump. After fighting there as gaily as if they were dancing at a ball, impatient to share the dangers of the admiral-in-chief, they paid a high price to be conveyed in a boat, under the enemy's fire, to Ruyter's ship. This first day was disastrous only to the Zealand squadron, whose lieutenant-admiral, Cornelius Evertz, had engaged with the English rear-admiral, Harman. The Englishman, whose crew was reduced from 300 to only forty, defended himself with extraordinary courage, and brought off his ship in safety. In the attack Evertz was struck down by a shot. His two sons concealed his death, in obedience to his instructions, and thus prevented it from disastrously affecting the issue of the engagement. The next morning, at six o'clock, the battle was renewed with equal fury. The sea had calmed, and was more favourable to the use of the guns. The fleets in order of battle passed each other three times in the course of the morning, without being able to come to close quarters. At noon, Tromp, consulting no one but himself, and wishing to profit by the favourable wind, undertook to turn the flank of the English fleet and take it in rear. This manœuvre

disturbed the order of attack and was unsuccessful. Of the two ships which followed him, that of Vice-Admiral Van den Helst, who was killed on board her, was disabled, and the other was sunk by a round shot, while Tromp himself was forced to abandon his own vessel, which was completely disabled.

Ruyter, who was just about to give the signal for boarding, seeing the peril to which his lieutenant's squadron was exposed, resolved to pierce the enemy's line, and come to his assistance. The enemy, unable to bar his passage, attempted to enclose him in an impenetrable ring, and the leading ships of the English squadrons attacked him in turns by firing broadsides and despatching fireships against him. Supported by the squadron of North Holland, which he had again rallied, he repulsed the attack with invincible determination, and sank six of the enemy's ships which were closely pressing him. But the damage which he had himself sustained forced him to retire, and he was obliged to leave to his lieutenant-admiral, Van Nès, the task of harassing the retreat of the enemy, who retired in good order towards the English coast. This pursuit won for the fleet of the States an important prize, which shed lustre on its victory. Admiral Askew, who commanded the squadron of the White on board the 'Royal Prince,' the finest ship in the English navy, carrying ninety guns and a crew of 600 men, had run aground, and, finding himself in danger of being set fire to by the Dutch fireships, was forced to surrender. Tromp was already flattering himself with the idea of bringing this splendid prize into the ports of the republic. But Ruyter, who had now come up with him, whether as Tromp asserted to rob a rival of this honour, or because he feared, if the fight recommenced, to be unable to guard so large a vessel, caused her to be burnt.

The English fleet had only apparently retired, in order to take measures to resume the offensive. The next day, June 14, 1666, Prince Rupert rejoined Monk with his squadron: they again set sail, and immediately formed themselves in line of battle. The Dutch fleet, favoured by the wind, was

ready for action, and the captains showed themselves eager to respond to the patriotic encouragements addressed to them by Ruyter. The battle began eight leagues from the shore off the coast of Flanders. At the first onset, De Liefde, vice-admiral of Tromp's division, hard pressed by the vice-admiral of Prince Rupert's squadron, was forced to shift his flag on to another ship. Ruyter and Prince Rupert both came to the assistance of their subordinates. Prince Rupert's ship, riddled through and through with shot, was run into by a fireship, and very nearly burnt. Vice-Admiral Algernon, who was following him, was mortally wounded. At the second attack, Tromp, constant to his favourite manœuvre, cut through the enemy's line, and for an instant threw it into disorder; but his squadron was so damaged that it required the greatest efforts on his part to bring it off. Towards the end of the day, Ruyter, whose ammunition was beginning to fail, determined to force a victory by giving the signal for attack to the whole fleet. After sustaining the shock for two hours, the enemy was forced to give way, and vainly endeavoured to get to windward to reform the line of defence. Monk and Prince Rupert, whose ships had been too much injured to continue the battle, could not prevent a precipitate retreat. Ruyter urged on the pursuit in the hope of destroying the hostile navy, until he was checked towards evening by a thick fog. The next day, the English fleet, having regained its own harbours, could no longer be overtaken; and that of the States, fearing to venture near the sandbanks off the coast of England, returned in triumph to the mouths of the Scheldt.

The account of the battle, sent by John de Witt to Van Beuningen, assumes from his pen the tone and even the very phraseology of a military bulletin. 'One ship of the squadron of the White, supposed to carry 50 or 60 guns,' he writes, 'sank along side Admiral de Liefde, who had given it its quietus. It is certain also that two of the enemy's ships have been burned, one on the second and the other on the final day of the battle, for some of our sailors are wearing breeches made from the fore-sail of one of these vessels, which they had visited in the ship's boat for purposes of

pillage whilst they were burning, so that one may truly say that they carried off their booty from the very jaws of hell.' A few days later, reverting to his usual train of thought, he writes: 'We have only to pray that the Lord will continue to this fleet the succour which He has already given.' He had gone down to Flushing to welcome it, accompanied by his sister, Maria Hœufft, whose husband was a member of the Board of Admiralty of Rotterdam. Her religious belief was as fervent as that of her brother, and she was touched with 'the pious and at the same time valiant dispositions' shown by the sailors.

The States had lost three vice-admirals, 2,000 men and four ships. The losses of the English amounted to 5,000 men killed and 3,000 prisoners; the battle cost them besides seventeen ships, of which nine remained in the possession of the victors. Public thanksgivings were ordered in the United Provinces. Simultaneously, bonfires were lighted in London, although according even to the testimony of the English historian, Burnet, the celebration of such rejoicings in England was 'to mock God and to trifle with man.'

The honours of the victory were shared between Tromp and Ruyter; 'of whom one,' wrote Count de Guiche, was 'the sword, and the other the shield of the republic.' Tromp had disconcerted the enemy by his impetuosity. When they saw his flag successively flying from six different ships, on board which he had embarked in turn 'to give battle, as a man changes his horse in the middle of an engagement on land, the English asked themselves if there were five or six Tromps in the fleet.' Still, by rushing into the midst of the enemy's forces on the second day of the battle, without sufficiently considering the danger, he had obliged Ruyter to risk everything to save him. 'This daring manœuvre,' wrote D'Estrades, 'might another time destroy him and his whole fleet.' As to Ruyter he had failed in no point in the exercise of the chief command, and the success of the engagement was due as much to his decision as to his prudence.

Both fleets had suffered so much in this obstinate encounter that they were forced to remain in harbour to be put into con-

dition to go to sea again. The Dutch fleet was ready to set sail first, thanks to the indefatigable care of the Grand Pensionary, who looked after everything, 'gave himself no rest, and performed almost impossibilities.' It put to sea on July 4, and set sail for the Thames and the Downs; its mission was to burn the enemy's ships and to make a descent upon England, on the faith of information which De Witt had too hastily accepted. During this expedition, which had no results, the English made good use of their time to increase their naval forces, and their fleet, which numbered a few vessels more than that of the republic, then sailed down the Thames to meet it. They came up with the Dutch towards evening, and, anchoring near Norfolk's Land, made ready for battle on the morrow. Before engaging in it, Ruyter received from the Grand Pensionary a despatch thus worded: 'If there is still time, take the most minute precautions for safety. Traitors have determined to set on fire and blow up several vessels of your fleet, no doubt including that on which you are, by means of barrels with false bottoms containing machines which are already on board and whose smouldering fires may take effect at any moment.' These fears were unfounded, and the searches instituted produced no discoveries.

The battle was no less fierce than the preceding one, but it was far from being so fortunate for the Dutch fleet. Monk and Ruyter found themselves again face to face, Monk with two new vice-admirals, Thomas Allen and Jeremiah Smith, Ruyter with his former officers, to whom had been added John Evertz, the old comrade of Obdam. He had resigned his command on account of his advanced age, after the battle lost in the preceding year, but had urgently implored to be allowed to resume it, to replace his brother, who had been killed in the last engagement, and whose death he desired to avenge or to share. At the very beginning of the action, the van formed of the squadrons of Zealand and Friesland advanced too rapidly, and the two lieutenant-admirals in command were killed. John Evertz had a leg shot off by a cannon-ball and succumbed at once to the wound. His father, his four brothers, and one of his sons had perished in the service of the republic, like

him, sacrificing their lives for their country. Hiddes de Vries, one of the most skilful seamen of his time, whom Ruyter considered fittest to succeed himself, shared the same fate, as did also Vice-Admiral Koenders. Disheartened by the death of their chiefs, the Friesland squadron made a shameful retreat. Vice-Admiral Koenders' crew mutinied, refused to execute the manœuvres ordered, and gave the signal to retire, which was obeyed by the whole flotilla of the van. As to the rear division, it put the finishing touch to the chances of success of the engagement by an act of fatal imprudence. Tromp, who commanded in conjunction with Meppel, the lieutenant-admiral of North Holland, after waiting long to attack the enemy, had boldly assumed the offensive against the squadron of the Blue. He set fire to one of the largest of the enemy's vessels, and disabled the admiral's ship. But he allowed himself to be seduced into a pursuit of the English squadron, which had pretended flight to separate him from Ruyter, whose safety was thus imperilled.

The admiral-in-chief, now reduced to his own squadron, and of this even a part was dispersed, found himself exposed to an unequal encounter in which it seemed that he must be vanquished. After valiantly defending himself during an entire day, with eight or nine ships against twenty-two, he took advantage of the fall of night to repair the injuries of his vessels and to take them out of range of the enemy. He hoped that Tromp's squadron would rejoin him, and that his signals would recall to action the van division, but his expectations were disappointed. He found himself the next morning as much isolated as he had been on the previous evening, with a part of the English fleet ranged in crescent form round his ships. The murderous fire to which he was exposed rendered the destruction of his ships inevitable. In this extremity he sent for his vice-admiral, Van Nès, to come on board to advise with him as to the course that should be taken. They decided that as they could not continue the fight they could render no better service to the State than by beating a retreat, and separated with a mutual promise of sharing the same fate.

Whilst Ruyter was opening a way for himself by bringing his guns to bear on the ships surrounding him, Monk, who hoped to take his great rival prisoner and carry him in triumph to London, pursued him at full speed. After obstinately firing into his vessel he determined to attack it with a fireship. Ruyter at once lowered three boats to keep off the danger. Four French gentlemen who had come on board as volunteers, the Chevaliers of Lorraine and Coislin, the Chevalier Cavoï, and Baron Busca, jumped into them to claim their share of the risk. The danger to which the admiral's ship was exposed was imminent; the fireship had arrived within range without the possibility of keeping it off; there only remained on board the pilot and the sailor who was charged to set fire to the powder. Ruyter owed his escape to the promptness of his movement. He suddenly put about, thus escaping collision with the fireship, and after attempting to sink it with his guns, he had ordered the boats to take possession of it, when the enemy set fire to it. Monk, fearing that the flagship might escape him, turned upon her the full fire of his batteries in the hope of sinking her. Ruyter had lost 200 men, and for a moment he felt his courage fail him. 'The circumstances were such,' he wrote in his report to the States, 'that I saw nothing before me but the total loss of what still remained.' He was in despair at not having been killed by one of the balls falling around him. But when his son-in-law, De Witte, captain of marines, proposed that they should kill themselves together, he overcame all weakness and redoubled his efforts to defend himself. He succeeded in approaching the Zealand sandbanks, where Monk did not venture to pursue him. He had left behind him three vessels threatened by fourteen English ships, and he now sent out to their rescue the Zealand squadron which he had at last overtaken near shore. While the hostile fleet was obliged to retire to avoid running aground, he cast anchor near the island of Walcheren, off Middleburg, without leaving one ship in the enemy's hands.

The English remained none the less masters of the sea. The United Provinces paid dearly for their inability to dispute

possession of it, which was more fatal to them than a defeat. One of the hostile flotillas carried fire and sword to the ill-defended entrance of the Texel. A hundred and sixty merchantmen under the convoy of two line-of-battle ships had retired into the roads of the Flie, notwithstanding the warnings given to them to seek a more secure harbour; they believed themselves to be here safe from danger, behind the sandbanks. An English frigate, followed by five fireships, found an entrance. She was piloted by a refugee, Captain Heemskerck, who, after the naval defeat of the preceding year, had been banished the republic for his cowardly desertion of the fleet. The two men-of-war were run into by the English fireships and reduced to ashes, and the enemy, profiting by the confusion that ensued, set fire to the merchant vessels, of which only eight or nine escaped the flames; the losses were estimated at twelve millions of florins. The island was ill-guarded, and the English crews, 1,200 strong, might easily have made themselves masters of the magazines belonging to the India Company and to the States, if their landing had not been prevented by the rains. To compensate themselves they made an incursion into the isle of Schelling, favoured by the high tide, and, contrary to all the rules of war, set fire to 4,000 houses. In retiring they seized Flodorp, which they likewise burnt, and massacred its inhabitants; they were only overtaken at the mouth of the Elbe by a Dutch squadron, which revenged their devastations by burning four of the enemy's ships, on one of which the traitor Heemskerck lost his life. So audacious an enterprise seemed, however, to deal an irreparable blow to the power and security of the republic.

These disasters were still further aggravated by the dissensions between Ruyter and Tromp. After his imprudent pursuit of the English squadron with which he was engaged, Tromp had not rejoined the fleet until the day after the return of the admiral-in-chief, at the risk of falling a victim to his temerity. Ruyter 'with impetuous vehemence' accused him of having caused the loss of the battle. Instead of excusing himself, Tromp, whose pride was incorrigible, ventured to retort upon Ruyter, reproaching him with having

lost the opportunity of cutting off the English vanguard and of having thus let slip the victory; he even forgot himself so far as to address to the States of Holland complaints against him as unjust as they were violent. The States, fearing the results of this breach, hastened to despatch their Grand Pensionary to arrange matters. On his way to Flushing by boat De Witt very nearly fell into the midst of the enemy's fleet. Having escaped this danger, he set heartily to work to pacify the dispute. Notwithstanding his friendship for Ruyter he received Tromp well, listened kindly to his explanations, and acknowledged that Ruyter had reproached him in too harsh terms. He endeavoured to bring them together by inviting both to dine with him. The States of Holland were less conciliatory; suspicious of Tromp and anxious about his connection with the Orange party, they determined to replace him by Van Ghent, a colonel of marines, although Tromp vainly endeavoured to melt them by his submission, declaring to De Witt 'that he would resign without a murmur the command of his squadron in the next engagement, if only he might be given a ship as second in command to Ruyter.' De Witt would have been glad to dissuade the States from such severity, but they refused to be satisfied with Tromp's promises. In the interests of discipline they dismissed him, and the crews of the fleet did not, as might have been feared, take his part.

The Grand Pensionary was impatient to resume the naval operations by means of the tardy assistance of the French fleet which he demanded 'in all haste.' The King of France confined himself to empty expressions of goodwill. To do honour to the exploits of Ruyter, he had just sent him the insignia of the Order of St. Michael, suspended from a gold chain, and his portrait set in diamonds. Ruyter in expressing his thanks to Louis had answered meaningly 'that he would prove his gratitude better when the French admiral by joining the Dutch fleet should permit him to fight by his side for the common cause.' After advancing as far as Brest with sixteen ships, the Duke de Beaufort had there anchored, fearing to expose himself to attack from the English fleet, which had taken up its position off the Isle of Wight. Ruyter, who had gone out to

meet him, waited for four days in vain in the roads of St. Jean, near Calais, for news of the movements of the French squadron, while the Duke de Beaufort, without giving him any notice, sailed for Dieppe, where he only remained one day. De Witt, on receiving accidental information of this, caused the order of recall sent to Ruyter to be countermanded, and new instructions were sent to him to continue his advance. He executed them with a readiness to which Count d'Estrades himself bears witness. But the channel was closed to him on the night of November 27 by a terrible storm which scattered his ships. Louis XIV. evaded the reproaches of the States, and accused them of having made Ruyter leave the roads of Saint Jean too hastily, and, rather pleased than annoyed at the obstacles which prevented the junction of the fleets, he put off till the following spring the performance of his engagements.

The Grand Pensionary determined none the less to continue the war, and to prove that the United Provinces could suffice for themselves. With this view he had already obtained authority to rejoin the fleet, no longer commanded by Ruyter, who had been wounded in the throat by a lighted fuse, which had endangered his life. The letters which De Witt wrote to the Duke de Beaufort lamenting his retreat, to the principal deputies of the States, and to those of the admiralities from whom he called for a speedy despatch of provisions, bear witness to his impatience to encounter the enemy. His hopes were, however, disappointed. After vainly offering battle, the Dutch fleet was forced by stress of weather and illness to return into harbour. It had at least retaken possession of the sea and restored the honour of the flag of the United Provinces.

Whilst the Republic was bearing the burden of a foreign war, she had to defend herself at home against the intrigues of a powerful party which made itself the accomplice of the King of England in seeking to force peace upon the States. Ever since the preceding year, after the fatal engagement in which Admiral Obdam had been killed, the popular discontent had been freely expressed. To take advantage of it, the English minister, Downing, had remained at the Hague, in spite of the

war, justifying himself by the residence in London of the ambassador of the United Provinces, Van Gogh. 'The States,' wrote Louis XIV. to D'Estrades, 'nourished in him a dangerous serpent.'

Downing declared that the King, his master, desired to live at peace with the republic, and he accused the Grand Pensionary De Witt of an obstinate determination to make war upon him, out of hatred to the uncle of the Prince of Orange; he demanded that an extraordinary assembly of all the provinces should be summoned, which should be invested with full powers, and from which he expected the restoration of the Prince of Orange. He did not indeed attempt to conceal his relations with the Orange party. He showed himself in public with the young prince's tutor, Zuylestein, who had married an Englishwoman, and often spent the evening with him, in company with the prince and his advisers. He had besides taken into his service as his principal agent, Oudart, who had formerly been secretary to the Princess Royal, and he employed him to gain over the principal deputies of the provinces, in the hope of forcing Holland to put an end to the war, and placing her at the mercy of Charles II. The States of Holland, who were closely watching these intrigues, gave orders for the arrest of Oudart, notwithstanding De Witt's apparent hesitation. A month later his fate was shared by Gringam, Downing's secretary, of whose seditious practices they had received information. They thus avenged themselves for the arrest of Cunæus, the secretary of the embassy in London, who had recently been imprisoned, at the moment when he was preparing to visit the sailors who were prisoners of war. Downing began at last to fear for his own liberty, and, hearing that it was threatened, quitted the Hague precipitately. His departure disconcerted the partisans of England, and the proposal made by the deputies of Overysseel to the States-General, that the young Prince of Orange should be sent as ambassador to Charles II., was not persisted in.

But in the following year, the general discouragement that naturally ensued from the disappointments and disasters of the last campaign revived the hopes of the Orange party. They

attempted to turn it to profit by urging an agreement with England, in order to make that the prelude to a change of government. These secret negotiations were conducted by a gentleman of French origin, Henri Fleury de Coulant, Lord of Buat. He belonged to an ancient family which had given marshals and admirals to France, and had married the daughter of Muysch, the former secretary of the States-General. After being page to the Stadtholder, Frederick Henry, he became captain of the guard to William II., and having continued to serve in the army of the States after the death of the last Stadtholder, he had distinguished himself by his courage in the war against Sweden. He had acquired the confidence of the Orange party, which, according to the testimony of a contemporary, 'made the mistake of attempting to transform into a diplomatist a man who was more fitted to fight than to meddle with politics.' Buat had been careful at the same time to keep on good terms with John de Witt, who on his side behaved with consideration towards him, hoping to discover by his means the intrigues of the King of England. It was no doubt with this object in view that the Grand Pensionary welcomed his first communications, and encouraged him to receive the overtures made by Charles, 'although he was not disposed to trust to them.' After consultation with the States of Holland, he authorised Buat to continue the preliminaries, but warned him to 'avoid any compromising measures,' and enjoined him to make known the answers given to his letters.

Buat immediately put himself in communication with the English Secretary-of-State, Lord Arlington, under the apparent direction of John de Witt, whose instructions, however, he lost no time in evading. Instead of acting in conformity with them, he allowed himself to be entangled in political intrigues, and determined to precipitate the conclusion of peace, in order to serve the interests of the Orange party. With this object, and under pretence of being better informed as to the disposition of the English court, he sent to London one of his friends, Gabriel Sylvius, son of a pastor of the church at Orange, and formerly in the service of the Princess Royal. He undertook

besides to collect the partisans of the House of Orange by bringing them into an association called the Society of Good Friends, which held its meetings at Rotterdam, and with which the young prince established relations. He flattered himself that he should obtain the concurrence of several deputies of the towns of Holland, and repaired secretly to Antwerp, where he had arranged to meet Sylvius and impart to him his plans. An intimate correspondence was maintained henceforth between Buat and Arlington, by the help of a cipher which Sylvius conveyed to the English Minister, and the unimportant letters were all that Buat contented himself with showing to De Witt, heedless of the danger of such conduct, of which the former suspicions shown by the Grand Pensionary might have warned him.

These proceedings might have continued for some time longer if Buat had not ruined himself by his own imprudence. Having gone one morning to visit the Grand Pensionary, 'who was in haste to go out, he handed to him at his request the last letters he had received, without perceiving that he had left among them one which it was important to him to conceal. It had been written to him by Sylvius, and had on the cover these words: 'For yourself.' It was in these terms: 'I must tell you that it would be convenient if the towns that are well disposed towards a good peace could unite closely together with this object, and come to some vigorous resolution among themselves, on which we could place solid reliance. In that case, I dare assure you, that the moment anything real was visible, more open steps would be taken on this side, and that a more detailed correspondence would be entered into, which should furnish privately all the means that might serve to favour a good arrangement.'

Such a letter, in spite of the intentionally vague terms employed, was sufficient to give the alarm and to reveal the plot. Buat did not perceive his fatal mistake until he had reached home, and he then ventured to return to the Grand Pensionary and ask for the letter which he had given up. De Witt replied that, in obedience to his official instructions, he was bound to hand it to the councillor-deputies of the province

Having failed in sufficient boldness to re-possess himself of it, were it at the sword's point, Buat did not even take advantage of the intimation given him by the Grand Pensionary on purpose to afford him a means of escape. De Witt, in fact, was interested in preventing a trial which might compromise himself on account of the encouragement he had given to Buat's correspondence. But instead of taking flight, when, according to a contemporary account, he had 'only to take horse in order to be out of Holland in five or six hours' time,' Buat, bewildered or over-confident, did not even think of providing for his safety by destroying the compromising papers that remained in his hands. He waited till the guards of the States came to arrest him in the evening, having had the whole day in which to escape, or to baffle all researches.

The papers which were seized in consequence of his inexcusable carelessness confirmed the proofs of connivance with the Orange party, which the Grand Pensionary thought it right to make known to the young Prince and to the Princess-Dowager. They rested particularly on the copy of a letter from Buat to Arlington written five months previously. 'We have formed a large party for peace, and consequently for my young master,' he had written, 'and we have taken our measures that he may be able to carry matters with a high hand over the other party which has always kept uppermost until now, in such manner that the King need not doubt that my young master will be able to stand, and that, before many days have passed, our good friends may obtain his recognition by means of the assurance which Sylvius and I have given them, that his Majesty has the best intentions in the world towards the peace, which has won the hearts of all the good people here.'

The fact of a secret correspondence commenced long before was conclusively revealed by the imprudent words which concluded this letter: 'To avoid the seizure of my last despatches I have thrown them into the fire.' The discovery of this document could not fail to result in Buat being sent for trial before the court of Holland. His accomplices, in their haste to escape prosecution, aggravated the accusations

which hung over him, and their flight, which was an avowal of guilt, contributed to his ruin.

On learning his arrest, one of his confederates, Ruyven, who had been banished ten years before for his intrigues, and who had returned within the last four years to Leuwaarden in Friesland, thought himself no longer in safety, and hastily retired to Antwerp. At the same time two other of the associates, Kiëvit, Tromp's brother-in-law, and Van den Horst, magistrates of Rotterdam, the former a member of the Council of State, and the latter councillor-deputy of Holland, fearing to be compromised by the seizure of his papers, sought refuge, one in London and the other at Brussels. The important position which they held gave credit to the suspicions of a vast plot intended to place the United Provinces in subjection to the Prince of Orange, and thus to make them vassals of England. Louis XIV. took the alarm, fearing that the republic, detached from the French alliance, might fall under a foreign domination. Accordingly, having commissioned his ambassador at the Hague to congratulate the Grand Pensionary upon the arrest of Buat, he hastened to demand a speedy and severe sentence. He expressed impatience at the slowness of the proceedings, and was ready to accuse the States of Holland themselves of a secret understanding with England 'which he should know well how to punish.' This intervention of the King of France determined them to prove themselves implacable, and to retain his assistance they gave him a sanguinary proof of their compliance.

De Witt committed the unpardonable weakness of lending himself to this policy. He sacrificed Buat to the uneasiness of Louis XIV., as he had, five years earlier, sacrificed three regicides to the resentment of Charles II., not succeeding, by a just retribution, in permanently gaining for the republic the benefit of alliances bought with the price of blood. He was not content with forcing the Prince of Orange, alarmed at the threatened revelations, to hold timidly aloof, while he publicly disavowed the conduct of Buat; he interposed directly in the trial, by addressing himself to the president

of the court, Van Dorp de Maasdam. 'I hope,' he wrote, 'that in this affair the court will proceed with vigour and promptitude, otherwise there would be great danger to fear: *Quis nescit maximam esse peccando illecebram impunitatis spem?*' ('Who does not know that the hope of impunity is the greatest encouragement to evil?') Guided by the suggestions of the Grand Pensionary, the States of Holland, suspecting the court of a disposition to leniency, charged them to do justice, and determined to summon the judges before their assembly. The president contented himself with replying that the judges would do their duty.

Dissatisfied with their prolonged indecision, but not daring, in spite of the proposal of some members, to require them to pronounce sentence in their presence, the States deputed seven commissioners to make declaration before the court that they considered Buat to be guilty of the crime of high treason. They thus perverted the law into an instrument of political power, according to the evil examples of the times, of which the Republic of the United Provinces had been unable to resist the pernicious contagion. After deliberating for more than five hours, the court, which had not been spared, on the other hand, either intrigues or remonstrances from the French ambassador, allowed itself to be dictated to. Of the eight judges who sat, three were in favour of banishment; five—of whom two belonged to the Orange party—voted for the penalty of death.

Guided by the suggestions of the Grand Pensionary, the States of Holland, suspecting the court, possibly with justice, of a disposition to leniency, had determined to summon the judges before their assembly. But after listening to the speech, in which De Witt, speaking in their name, called upon the judges to do prompt and decided justice, the president merely replied that the court would do its duty.

Buat's accomplices were not spared: Van Ruyven and Kièvit were, like him, condemned to death, while Van den Horst, who was alone treated with more indulgence, was punished only with exile; but they had all placed themselves in safety, and the sentence of the court could strike only one victim.

According to some accounts the real author of the sentence was Van Dorp de Maasdam, who, as senior judge, replaced provisionally the late president of the court, Dedel, to whom no successor had yet been appointed. It is true that, upon the suggestion of the Grand Pensionary, the States seemed desirous to reward his obsequious compliance, by granting him the salary of president and dating his reception of it from the day when he first filled the vacant office; and that this favour was granted to him upon the very day, May 3, upon which the sentence was pronounced. But at least he may be cleared from the base intrigue imputed to him. Not content with finding Buat guilty, Van Dorp is said to have manœuvred to ruin him more surely by getting rid of Van der Graeff, the judge most leniently disposed towards him. Summoned to Buat by a fictitious message, the visit he made to the prisoner was said to have been used as a pretext for excluding him from his place among the judges, and this exclusion—failing which the majority of votes would doubtless have been for exile—had sufficed to secure the capital sentence. The official notes of the trial refute this assertion. It is true that Van der Graeff did visit Buat to inquire after the prisoner's health, taking care to be accompanied by the gaoler in order to avoid any accusation of a private interview. This imprudent step having been noised abroad and reported to the Council of Dordrecht, Van der Graeff came to an explanation with his colleagues, and Van Dorp de Maasdam was only one of those who voted in favour of the resignation offered by Van der Graeff and not forced upon him.

The States of Holland, having by this condemnation intimidated the partisans of the King of England, might have proved themselves merciful. They continued inflexible. De Witt was with the fleet, and they dared not, without consulting him, show mercy to the culprit. In vain did the States of Zealand claim the right to judge Buat in his capacity of captain of a company in their pay; in vain the Elector of Brandenburg endeavoured to obtain at least a reprieve. The application of the States-General themselves was denied, notwithstanding their complaint that Buat had been withdrawn

from their jurisdiction. Notwithstanding that the peace negotiations, which formed the subject of his trial, belonged to their prerogatives of federal power, they could obtain no attention to their protest, although their president for the week, De Wit, deputy of Holland and cousin of the Grand Pensionary, had made himself the mouthpiece of it. Six days after his condemnation, Buat was executed, the popular imprecations against his judges resounding to the very foot of the scaffold. His death did not disarm the French Government, which pushed its animosity so far as to complain that the crime of high treason had not been specified in the sentence, so as to justify the confiscation of the property belonging to him in France. By taking every means to ensure his condemnation, although he had vainly allowed him the chance of escape, De Witt had sacrificed justice to political expediency, either to satisfy France, or to discourage the Orange party. He had no excuse to offer but that of reasons of State, the usual pander to all sins of public life, which it attempts to justify, but can never exonerate.

When once the plot of the secret negotiations had been baffled and cruelly punished, the Grand Pensionary, having no longer any fear lest peace should be imposed on the republic, had no further interest in the continuation of the war. The King of England, on his side, could hardly bear the cost of it. He was involved in all the embarrassments of an exhausted exchequer. He had to fear besides in Scotland the risings of the Presbyterian party, and in Ireland the insurrection of the Catholics. De Witt urged the King of France to send arms to the Irish, 'who,' he said, 'awaited only an opportunity to shake off the yoke.' Meanwhile, the calamities befalling London spread consternation through the kingdom. The plague had ravaged every quarter of the town, and had carried off in less than six weeks seventy thousand victims. Hardly had this scourge ceased, when a terrible fire reduced to ashes two-thirds of the city and its finest buildings. Parliament, after granting the King a fresh subsidy of a million, expressed itself strongly in favour of peace, and when the States sent back to London the body of

Admiral Barklay, who had been killed in one of the late engagements, Charles himself took pains to assure them of his pacific dispositions. These were, however, rather apparent than real. He did not yet despair of bringing the republic to his feet by new intrigues. It was with this object that, having first, though expecting a refusal, proposed London as the seat of the negotiations, he then suggested the Hague, which it seemed impossible should be declined.

The Court of France dissuaded the States from accepting this, fearing lest Charles II. should profit by the return of his minister, Downing, and the despatch of the plenipotentiaries, to give fresh encouragement to the Orange party, and to detach the republic from the French alliance. Neither did De Witt desire to expose the republic to this danger. Not that he was to be moved by fears of a plot against his life, with which the French ambassador attempted to alarm him, representing that Downing would have greater facilities for instigating such at the Hague than anywhere else. He showed himself so little concerned that he proudly refused the proposal made in the assembly of the States of Holland, to give him a guard. But he did not conceal from himself the intrigues which the King of England might easily set on foot under the shelter of diplomatic immunities, if the peace conferences were held in the town where the States sat in assembly. He resolved then to oppose a refusal to Charles's proposal, notwithstanding the favourable reception which the deputies of the other provinces seemed disposed to give it. By his advice, the States of Holland, presenting themselves in a body in the federal assembly, declared that they could not be held bound against their wishes to permit the assembling of a congress on the territory of their province. The States-General allowed themselves to be persuaded. To mislead Charles II. as to their true motives, they expressed fears that at the Hague they should be unable to protect his envoys against the popular irritation, reminding him of the disastrous fate that had befallen those of Cromwell; they thanked him none the less for his advances, and offered him his choice of Breda, Bois-le-Duc, and Maestricht.

After vainly endeavouring thus to provoke internal dissensions, 'which is a great feature of English policy,' wrote De Witt to Van Beuningen, 'and one which it requires dexterity to parry,' Charles abruptly changed his tactics, and resolved to hasten forward the conferences at any cost. He proposed to profit by them to resume intercourse with Louis XIV., and to break the ties which united France to the republic. Circumstances appeared to lend themselves henceforward to a change of policy, and aroused in him the hope of depriving the United Provinces of their ally. Louis appeared impatient to commence the dismemberment of the Spanish monarchy, and was preparing to invade the Netherlands, sword in hand, to claim their succession. The English Government foresaw that the States-General, feeling themselves threatened by this annexation, would consider it their duty to oppose it, and would thus themselves alienate the King of France from their cause. Charles, therefore, hoping to isolate them, instead of finding fault with their refusal to allow the congress to meet at the Hague, hastened to inform the States that he would comply with their wishes by making choice of Breda.

The Grand Pensionary could not refuse to accept this fresh offer of negotiation. He had no settled aversion from peace; the projects of Louis XIV. against the Spanish Netherlands appeared to him now so formidable that he recognised the absolute necessity of treating with England. With the wish of assisting towards a reconciliation, he had recourse to the intervention of Peter Coyet, the Swedish ambassador in London and formerly his fellow-student at Leyden, to propose the mediation of Sweden, which was accepted. He had, indeed, never desired to make the republic the irreconcilable enemy of England, and had refused, shortly before the Fire of London, to take any part in a plot for burning down that town, declaring 'that he did not wish to enlarge and render irreparable the breach between the two nations.' Later on, when hostilities had been resumed, De Witt still wrote 'that it would be unprofitable and unchristian to set fire to the towns, and that it was far better to have some consideration for the inhabitants.' As soon as he learned that Charles was ready to

send to Breda his two ambassadors, Denzil Holles and Henry Coventry, he urged the appointment of the plenipotentiaries of the republic. Obligated to leave to the States of each province the right of nominating one of their deputies, and fearing that so numerous a deputation would easily be disunited, he caused it to be decided that full powers should be entrusted to only three of the negotiators, Jongéstal, president of the court of justice in Friesland, Peter de Huybert, pensionary of Zealand, and Beverningh, to whom the chief place in the embassy was reserved. The King of France sent as his representatives Count d'Estrades and Courtin; the King of Denmark, whose participation had been insisted upon by the States, was represented by Clingenberg and Charisius; and the King of Sweden, in his capacity of mediator, by Flemming and Count Dohna, who had been selected to succeed the lately deceased Coyet. In order to obviate all questions of etiquette or precedence 'a large enclosed round table was surrounded with exactly similar chairs, with eight wickets corresponding with the room-doors, so that the negotiators, on entering, might immediately take their places as they came, without the possibility of any dispute.'

It was at Breda, as afterwards at Aix-la-Chapelle, and later still at Madrid, that Beverningh justified his reputation as a statesman, and took rank amongst the first diplomatists of his day. According to his contemporaries he was born with the gift of appeasing dissensions, and he merited the surname of the 'Pacific.' 'No affair is too complicated for him to disentangle it, if he chooses to take the trouble,' declared those who treated with him. His perspicacity and correctness of judgment were invaluable towards the success of an embassy. Gifted, besides, with a readiness of speech, which often rose to eloquence, he knew how to combine moderation with firmness. 'Less severe than John de Witt, he more readily encouraged confidences, when they were not opposed to the welfare of the state.' To excuse his occasional outbursts of temper he was apt to attribute them to purposely affected intemperance, a fact mentioned in all the reports of the French ambassadors. 'He likes to drink,' says Courtin,

'and the first fumes of the wine go to his head.' 'With his morning sobriety,' observes Pomponne, 'he often loses the intelligence and capacity that he possesses before dinner.' D'Estrades writes later: 'A few extra glasses of wine often make him much more open in his talk.' Under cover of this excuse he allowed himself a violence of language and demeanour which were calculated to hasten the conclusion of diplomatic negotiations and assure their success.

The States relied upon him to disconcert, by the speedy conclusion of peace, the secret projects of alliance between the two kings of France and England. While the English ambassadors endeavoured to throw suspicion on the Grand Pensionary by accusing him of complicity with the King of France, who, they said, 'would make him Count of Guelders as soon as he had conquered the Spanish Netherlands,' they themselves showed the greatest eagerness to come to an agreement with the French negotiators. The envoys of Louis XIV. responded by encouragements to these advances. They exhorted the plenipotentiaries of Charles to maintain the pretensions of England, while they dissuaded those of the United Provinces from yielding on any point. These intrigues were not difficult to discover, and had roused the mistrust of the Dutch ambassadors who imparted their suspicions to the States-General. 'Those persons who are most in credit at the Hague,' owned Count d'Estrades, 'apprehend that peace may be followed by a close union between France and England.' John de Witt on his side writes to Beverningh: 'From the information that I receive and from my own personal opinion, I believe that we have no assistance to expect from France towards the success of the negotiations; but I cannot yet believe that they will use treachery and make a treaty without us; we may, however, act as if the French might be capable of such an infamy, and we will do so accordingly, for it is my fixed rule always to be prepared for the worst.'

To baffle these manœuvres, the plenipotentiaries of the States sought to obtain the conclusion of peace by the most sincere and urgently made offers. They proposed that the

belligerent powers should have the choice, either of recovering all that belonged to them before the war, or of keeping what they had now got, and renouncing all previous claims. The English envoys accepted this last offer, but refused to accede to the subjoined condition. They wished to reserve to the King of England the right of renewing the disputes which had served as a pretext for the rupture of the last treaty, and thus to secure him an opportunity for recommencing hostilities whenever he chose. They added to their demands that of an amnesty which should allow the accomplices of Buat to return to Holland, and proposed thus to encourage fresh intrigues against the government of the States. Their objections made the conferences useless, and might give rise to fears that they would soon be broken off. To this policy of intentional delays and premeditated ill-will, the Grand Pensionary resolved to oppose a bold stroke which overwhelmed England under the burden of an unforeseen disaster and enabled the United Provinces to conquer peace by victory.

While the King of England, giving himself up to a fallacious security, was reducing his fleet to a peace footing, and dismantling a part of his ships, the States-General, with more foresight, had taken measures for the possibility of a renewal of the war, without taking any notice of the negotiations. De Witt had urged them to provide for the cost of another campaign, towards which fifteen millions of florins were furnished to the admiralties. The States of Holland undertook to provide eight millions of this sum. To meet this increase of their contribution they could no longer have recourse to loans, which, since the beginning of the war had exceeded twelve millions of florins. The sale of some lands did not produce sufficient for their wants. They could no longer spare the taxpayers, and, consequently, reimposed the tax upon capital to the amount of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., raised the income-tax from 10 to 15 per cent., and doubled the chimney-tax. The generous eagerness of the town councils, who, following the example given by Amsterdam, offered to advance the amount of their contributions to the public treasury at their own cost, came to their aid most usefully.

Thanks to the employment of these resources, the fleet which was ready to put to sea consisted of 66 ships carrying 3,300 guns. It had on board 28 companies of foot equipped for a landing, and employed in its service several English pilots—deserters—who had been carefully enlisted in view of a maritime invasion of England. The Grand Pensionary had been long meditating such a step. During the preceding year he had pushed as far as the mouth of the Thames in order to reconnoitre the channels which might be passable for the Dutch ships and would thus enable them to destroy a part of the English fleet; he had, besides, urged Ruyter to prepare the means necessary for the execution of this project. As soon as the equipments were completed, he easily obtained orders for the departure of the Dutch squadron from the Texel.

Himself prevented from leaving the Hague, where he was detained by the necessity of watching the negotiations, he sent in his stead his brother Cornelius, whom the States of Holland appointed as their plenipotentiary with the admiral. The instructions for the offensive character of the expedition were drawn up secretly in the committee of deputies in charge of naval affairs, to whom the States-General had transferred their authority. John de Witt took care that they should not be divulged; writing to his brother he desired him 'not to address to the States any letter concerning the proposed expedition without giving him preliminary information.'

When the fleet had arrived at the mouth of the Thames, off Harwich, a council of war was held. It decided that a squadron of thirty vessels, comprising seventeen line-of-battle ships carrying from thirty to sixty guns, and thirteen frigates accompanied by ten fireships, should be despatched against the English ships stationed in the Thames and in one of its affluents, the river Medway. The command was given to Lieutenant-Admiral Van Ghent; and Cornelius de Witt, jealous of sharing his perils, claimed the right to accompany him.

The squadron detailed for the service sailed up the Thames beyond Gravesend, but without overtaking the English ships which retreated towards London, and seized the fort of

Sheerness, which commands the junction of the two rivers. After a heavy cannonading they then took possession of the Isle of Sheppey, victoriously entered the Medway and sailed up to Rochester, thirty miles from London. The object of the expedition was Chatham, the principal arsenal of England, where the largest men-of-war in the English navy were lying at anchor half-dismantled. They seemed secure here from all dangers. Batteries on both banks of the Medway—the fire from which was supported by companies of fusiliers—four line-of-battle ships and two frigates ready for action, two large vessels and four fireships sunk in the stream, and only leaving open a narrow channel closed by an iron chain, opposed apparently insurmountable obstacles to any attack. Ruyter, who had overtaken in his launch the van of his squadron, gave the signal for their removal. The Dutch fleet, contenting themselves with keeping up their fire, had not ventured to advance, till Captain Van Brakel, undeterred by the risk of the attempt, took upon himself boldly to force a passage. He had been placed under arrest for having allowed some of his crew to land, but begged permission to return on board his frigate, promising to undertake the destruction of the enemy's ships. He was not to be stopped by the fire from either batteries or ships; without firing a shot, he sailed close up to the chain, and then, suddenly discharging a broadside at the nearest frigate, boarded and took possession of her. At the same time Captain Daniel van Rhein, who had followed him with a fireship, encouraged by his example, forced his vessel against the chain, broke it, and set fire to one of the enemy's ships which had been protected by it. The passage being thus open, the other frigates, carried forward by an irresistible impulse, advanced impetuously, silenced the fire from the shore batteries, and took advantage of the enemy's confusion to complete the success of the day. A second line-of-battle ship was fired, whose captain, the valiant Douglas, refused to forsake her; and the 'Royal Charles,' the flagship of the Duke of York, which had carried Charles II. back to England, abandoned by her crew, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

To complete the victory, the seven frigates that drew least water, commanded by chosen captains, sailed still higher up the river, and burnt under the very guns of Upnor Castle, four other ships which had taken refuge there. These orders were carried out with the most daring gallantry under the eyes of Cornelius de Witt and Ruyter, who had followed on board a fireship, and in view of the Duke of York and Monk, despairing spectators of the disaster. Only one ship escaped, and the English, not having succeeded in time in sinking the other three, which were all flagships, they were fired by the Dutch, whilst a body of sailors was landed, who took possession of the batteries, spiked the guns, and destroyed all materials which could be of use in the equipment of a fleet.

Terror spread even to London, where the sinister sound of the enemy's guns, heard at a distance of twenty-five miles, was listened to for the first and last time. Business was suspended; the populace—out of work—assembled in the streets crying 'treason.' 'The distraction and consternation of the court and city,' writes a contemporary, 'was as great as if the Dutch had not only been masters of the Thames, but had really landed an army of 100,000 men. There seemed nothing to be done but to await the arrival of the enemy without any hope of resistance remaining. The Republic of the United Provinces thus avenged itself for the alarms created by the landing of the English at the Texel, and repaired almost in a single day the misfortunes of which she had been the victim through the war.'

While this victory was being celebrated in the United Provinces by religious thanksgivings and with all the outward signs of patriotic joy, the Grand Pensionary seemed impatient for new successes which might allow the destruction of the English fleet to be completed. With this object he demanded the often vainly promised assistance of the naval forces of France. As soon as he learned the happy result of the expedition, he urged the ambassador, D'Estrades, to decide the King of France to place at the service of the republic some fireships that had been built for him at Amsterdam, by sending them as reinforcements to the Dutch

fleet, which was insufficiently provided with them. Louis XIV. evaded the request; he was too much interested in keeping on terms with the King of England to assist the United Provinces in crushing him. He contented himself with announcing that his admiral, the Duke de Beaufort, had received a copy of the new convention already agreed to for the junction of the two fleets, with orders to act accordingly. But Lionne was not afraid to own that the orders had been countermanded, in the expectation that peace would be soon concluded, and the Duke de Beaufort continued for two months longer patiently to await the end of the war in the port of Brest.

Other disappointments put obstacles in the way of the plan whose execution the Grand Pensionary still obstinately persisted in. The undertaking which had just been so gloriously accomplished had, until now, justified the bold advice he had given to his brother. When the fleet had sailed from the Dutch ports, he had carefully pointed out to him, with the most minute detail, the means of entering the Thames and the Medway. Some days afterwards, in a letter which crossed on its road the news of the victory of Chatham, making use of the secret advices he received from England, he pointed out to him the enemy's ships which might be taken or destroyed. When he saw that his previsions had been justified, his only fear was of delay in the final blows that he desired to inflict upon the enemy. 'If the only difficulty lies in contrary winds,' he wrote to his brother, 'you must take to the oars to advance. In any case I depend so much upon your determination of character that I am sure that everything possible will be attempted, and in the state of consternation in which England now is, nothing is difficult to a force so formidable as that at your command. It must not be said hereafter: *Vincere scit, victoria uti nescit*—"He knows how to conquer, he knows not how to profit by victory."'" The States-General shared in the inspiration of this bold policy. They had just learnt that the expeditionary squadron, finding no more of the enemy's ships within reach, and made uneasy by the assembling of the militia summoned from all quarters

to repel a landing, had left the Thames. Displeased at this retreat, they sent orders to it 'to re-enter the river and advance as far as possible up stream, and thus to keep the enemy in continual alarm.' John de Witt accompanied this despatch by a letter addressed to his brother, in which he seems to find fault with the indecision which checked the prompt execution of his recommendations. 'I hope,' he wrote, 'that the officers in command, having seen that undertakings long deemed impossible are altogether practicable, will prove henceforth the more disposed to make further attempts, even if they may appear to them somewhat difficult. The commissioners of the States for naval affairs pray God to inspire with such zeal and forwardness all officers, both of land and sea, who are with you, that you may have to restrain their ardour.' In a subsequent letter he blamed his brother for asking for orders from the States-General, instead of giving them himself, by making use of the full powers entrusted to him, and expressed an impatience which took heed of no obstacles. 'We cannot understand,' he wrote again, 'why our superior officers, who should surpass you in courage and resolution, cannot fall in with your ideas, and why our ships remain inactive.'

The presence of the Grand Pensionary with the fleet was wanting. His brother could not replace him, he was too much accustomed to obey his instructions to be able himself to take the lead. Embarrassed by the different orders he received he did not venture to supplement them by a prompt determination, and his courage could not supply the place of the missing authority. In obedience to the orders he had received, Ruyter resumed the offensive, but his efforts were vain to inflict on the enemy fresh losses which might have completed their ruin. He did not venture to advance as far as the coast of Scotland, in spite of the possibly rash advice of John de Witt, who urged him to attack the port of Montrose, so as to raise a false alarm by the aid of which he might then fall upon Leith and Edinburgh, which were unfurnished with troops. To satisfy the States-General he attempted to re-enter the Thames, but found that he could not without risk ascend the stream above

Gravesend, as the English had blocked the channel below London by sinking several ships. He contented himself with leaving a squadron under the command of Lieutenant-Admiral Van Nès, at the junction of the Thames and the Medway, so as to prevent all exit from the river, and set to work to search out the enemy's ships in all the neighbouring ports. The attack which he attempted upon Harwich on leaving the Thames not having succeeded, he appeared successively before Portsmouth, Dartmouth, Torbay, and Plymouth, and advanced to the furthest point of the south coast. But the winds were contrary, the harbours had been fortified and rendered inaccessible, and all the success of the enterprise reduced itself to a landing at Torbay, where some merchant vessels were burnt. During this expedition the squadron under Van Nès was very near being destroyed; he had had to repulse two attacks in which the enemy's fireships had placed him in danger, and when Ruyter returned he had quitted the Thames, which he continued to blockade, but only by anchoring at the mouth of the river.

Although the latest attempts had not entirely fulfilled the hopes of the Grand Pensionary, the success of this naval campaign, so boldly won, could not fail to hasten the completion of the negotiations. The pride of England had been lowered: formerly sovereign of the seas, she had been reduced to the inability of preventing an invasion of her territories, and her fleets flying before the enemy's ships had been unable to defend her. She had been humbled by a republic whom Charles's ministers had boasted 'that they would chastise with rods,' and the conflagration of her ships made it dangerous to prolong any further the resistance they had till now opposed to the conclusion of peace. At the first news of the resumption of hostilities the ambassadors of Charles II., supported by the French ambassadors, had, it is true, proudly declared that they only remained at Breda to await their letters of recall; but the disaster which dealt so fatal a blow to the maritime power of England forced them to conceal their resentment. They received instructions to hasten forward the negotiations, and thus to obtain peace without delay. The States on their

side were not disposed to abuse their victory. The Grand Pensionary, notwithstanding the warm encouragement he had given to the late expedition, had never lost sight of the idea 'that its special object was the speedy termination of the war!' Faithfully interpreting his brother's views, Cornelius de Witt, not yielding to any warlike impulses, wrote in these words to the States-General, the very evening of the fight, on board the Royal Charles, the trophy of their victory: 'We render thanks to Almighty God, that it has pleased His Providence to confer such glory on the arms of their High Mightinesses, and we cannot doubt that, to their great contentment, peace will be obtained.'

It could not indeed be delayed without fatally compromising the interests of their foreign policy. The invasion of the Spanish Netherlands by Louis XIV. had just startled the United Provinces. As long as they were at war with England, they could not attempt to check the conquests of the King of France, and, in order not to be reduced to the impossibility of opposing them, the States-General were the more urgent to hasten the conclusion of the negotiations. Their moderation completed the work begun by victory, and the persevering efforts of Beverningh, which won for him the most flattering expressions of satisfaction, removed the last obstacles. 'It was with regret that I saw my country dragged into a baleful war,' wrote De Witt to the minister plenipotentiary of the Emperor of Germany, 'and it is therefore with extreme satisfaction that I see her issue from it, both on account of the repose she will enjoy, and because I hope that this particular peace will be a step towards a general peace throughout Europe.'

The envoys of Charles II. who wished to appear to cede nothing to contrary fortune, having renewed some of their original pretensions, the envoys of the States did not take advantage of this to oppose fresh demands; they confined themselves to their first proposals, unchanged by the success of the late expedition. These proposals, hitherto rejected by the King of England, formed the articles of the Peace of Breda, signed by the belligerent parties through the mediation of Sweden on July 31, 1667, and ratified a month later. They

mutually acknowledged all the conquests which had belonged to each before the war. England retained New Amsterdam or New York, and New Jersey in America. The United Provinces obtained the restitution of the colony of Surinam which they had lost, and although they had formerly promised to restore to England the island of Pouleron, one of the Moluccas and perhaps the wealthiest colony belonging to the India Company, they now retained this, alleging that they had never given up its possession.

The King of England renounced also all the claims which had served as pretexts for war. He gave way on some points of the Navigation Act, and allowed Dutch merchantmen to convey to England the products of the soil of the republic, as well as the merchandise of Germany and the Low Countries. He even consented to renew the treaty of commerce which the States had obtained with such difficulty five years previously, and had hardly had time to profit by. He insisted, however, on the saluting of the English flag, but the States would only undertake to comply with this demand towards ships of war, and that only in British waters, with the proviso that it was only accorded as a mark of courtesy. They hoped thus to secure themselves against insulting demands, which might after a few years' interval provoke a fresh rupture. The envoys of the King of England signed two other treaties on the same day, one with France and one with Denmark. By the first, Charles restored to Louis Nova Scotia, and recovered possession of a part of the Antilles. By the second treaty he secured to the King of Denmark a share in the benefits of his alliance with the States-General, and declared that he resumed his former amicable relations with him.

The Peace of Breda, thus imposed upon England by a victorious expedition, was a title of glory for the republic, of which the Grand Pensionary of Holland had a right to be proud. He received on all hands congratulations which appeared to embarrass his modesty, and to which he replied by declaring 'that he had no other merit than that of ardent and unfailing zeal in his country's service.' If he prided himself upon anything, it was on the renown that she had

acquired. 'I assured you in December of last year,' he writes to a friend, 'that I considered it as certain that within two years the United Provinces would be in a better position and held in higher consideration than ever before. I am confident that you will be of opinion with me that this prediction is accomplished, since firstly, by the blessing of God, the forces of this State have penetrated to the heart of the enemy's country and have obtained so glorious a victory over him; and secondly, by the grasp of this State, as it were, upon his throat, he has been reduced to consent to a peace such as was yesterday concluded at Breda with conditions which it has been hitherto impossible to exact.'

The news of the signature of the treaty was received with manifestations of joy in the United Provinces. Free expression was given to popular satisfaction and patriotic pride. Numerous medals were issued in commemoration of a peace so gloriously obtained. That which the States-General caused to be struck represented on the reverse Concord holding in one hand a cornucopia with this motto: *Irato bellum, placato numine pax est* ('When God is angry, there is war; when He is appeased, there is peace'). There was this inscription besides: *Rediit concordia mater. Breda, 1667* ('Concord like a mother has returned to us'). On the face, Concord, in the guise of Minerva, holding the seven arrows, which were the arms of the United Provinces, attached to her lance with a lion and a lamb at her side, was represented crushing Discord with this device: *Mitis et fortis* ('Gentle and strong'). In the distance were seen ships in flames and a village on fire, and over the head of Discord these words were to be read: *Procul hinc mala bestia regnis* ('Away with the monster so fatal to nations!').

The publication of the peace was made in state at Breda, before the doors of the ambassadors' houses and in front of the town-hall. In the evening the ambassadors of England, France, and Denmark set conduits of wine flowing in the public squares. A bonfire was lighted in front of the town-hall, and the deputies of the States gave a great collation there to which all the maidens of the town were invited.

'We drank *sommetjes* with them, as healths are called here,' wrote D'Estrades, 'and this is how it is done; wine and sugar are put into a glass, the girl first drinks a mouthful, then returns the glass to whoever offered it to her and kisses him on the mouth; the man does the same thing in turn, and so on till there is not a drop of wine left in the glass. This continues far into the night.' At the Hague, the Grand Pensionary gave a sumptuous banquet, and during a part of the night the townspeople, in whose amusements he joined, danced and sang before his house. It is interesting to learn the opinion he expressed upon these pomps and rejoicings. After the festivities held in honour of the victory of Chatham some months previously, he wrote to Beverningh: 'I know that those public illuminations cause a good deal of excess and imply a good deal of pride; but as they are also the means to impress upon the people the idea of benefits received from God, and to induce them to take more interest in the successes obtained, I have thought that this last success above all deserves these manifestations of public joy.'

The States-General and the States of Holland did not forget the victors. They successively congratulated both Cornelius de Witt and Ruyter. The States of Holland, in order to perpetuate the memory of the service they had rendered to the republic in the last expedition, presented to them, as well as to Van Ghent, magnificent gold cups, valued at 5,000 florins each: these were adorned with medallion paintings in enamel, representing the attack on the fort at Sheerness, and the taking and firing of the English ships near Chatham and Upnor; the stand was engraved with festoons of flowers, and on the cover was a red lion, the emblem of the arms of the province. The States of Holland did not consider this gift a sufficient recompense for Cornelius de Witt. The following year a proposal was made to buy him an estate—the manor of Spikenisse—but was not favourably received. Notwithstanding the persistent disapproval of some deputies, he received, however, an annuity of 30,000 florins. The Grand Pensionary, who had carefully abstained from intervening in the debates, did not conceal his satisfaction at these

expressions of gratitude, which he considered fully justified. He writes to Valkenier, one of the deputies of Amsterdam, 'that the great constancy and inflexible will of his brother had won for the States the success of the expedition which had been, by the grace of God, the instrument of victory and consequently of peace.' The Council of Dordrecht, of which Cornelius de Witt was burgomaster, was foremost in rendering him the honours which were his due. They commissioned John de Baan, one of the first painters of the country, to execute his portrait; two years later the picture, splendidly framed, was received in state and placed in the great room of the town-hall. Cornelius de Witt was represented on the bank of a river on which were the English ships in flames, his baton of command in his hand, and a cornucopia beside him, to symbolise the blessings of peace for which the United Provinces were indebted to him. The inscription adorning the picture recalled 'to all generations to come, the exploits of the great citizen who in an heroic expedition had destroyed the most powerful ships of England in the very rivers of the hostile kingdom, had taken from her the empire of the seas and forced her to make peace.' The return of Cornelius to his native town had the splendour of a triumph. When he drew near Dordrecht in his boat, he was greeted by salutes from the guns and salvos from the burgher guard, while the trumpets blew a blast. When he landed at the quay the magistrates came forward to meet and congratulate him, and, followed by all the inhabitants, accompanied him to his own house. In the evening the town was illuminated, and the next day a thanksgiving sermon was solemnly preached in his honour.

Public opinion encouraged these marks of consideration. The poets of Holland, and especially those of Dordrecht—amongst others P. Godewyck, the former tutor of the two brothers—vied with each other in publishing praises of John and Cornelius de Witt, to which were joined those of Ruyter, as may be seen in a contemporary collection. Vondel wrote songs of triumph in their honour. The learned Jacques Leydius, pastor of Dordrecht, obedient to the same inspiration, published shortly afterwards his fine Latin work entitled

'Belgium gloriosum'—'The glory of Holland'—in which he recalled, with rare elegance of language and often with eloquence equal to the great writers of antiquity, the successes of the republic and the happy conduct of the late war, and allotted the principal merit to the Grand Pensionary and his brother, whom he called 'the good geniuses of the State.'

This prosperity, brilliant as it seemed, could not deceive John de Witt, neither was he permitted the satisfaction of enjoying it at leisure. Dangers, which were constantly renewed, menaced the independence of the republic, forced to defend herself alternately against her powerful neighbours. Peace with England was hardly concluded, when already a rupture with France seemed imminent.

CHAPTER VII.

RESISTANCE OF THE UNITED PROVINCES TO FRANCE—INVASION OF THE NETHERLANDS BY LOUIS XIV.—THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE—GREAT DIPLOMATIC VICTORY.

Louis XIV.'s projects of territorial aggrandisement—The death of Philip IV. determines him to put them in execution—Resources of France—Exhaustion of Spain—Diplomatic Controversy—'The Buckler of State and of Justice,' published by Lisola—Invasion of the Netherlands—Their rapid submission—Uneasiness of the United Provinces—The promises of agreement violated—Negotiations of Louis XIV. with Europe—Isolation of the States-General—Dangers of a rupture with France—De Witt endeavours to bring about an agreement to prevent the annexation of the Netherlands to France—Louis XIV. modifies his demands, but refuses to give guarantees if the war recommences—Negotiations of the United Provinces with Sweden and England—Sweden detached from France—The King of England is obliged to yield to public opinion, by renewing intercourse with the States-General—Temple's Mission to the Hague—Agreement between Temple and De Witt—Conditional adhesion of Sweden—Signing of the Triple Alliance—Secret articles—Consequences of the Treaty—Public rejoicings—Deception of Louis XIV.—His secret treaty with the Emperor for the division of the Spanish Monarchy—Renewal of hostilities—Franche-Comté conquered in a fortnight—Louis XIV. reassured as to the Triple Alliance by communications from Count d'Estrades and by the tact of John de Witt—Van Beuningen's new embassy—Spain is compelled to accept Louis XIV.'s offers—She consents to give up to him his conquests in the Netherlands—Irritation of the King of France on hearing of the Secret Articles of the Triple Alliance—His attempts to divide the allies—Energetic policy of the States inspired by De Witt—They secure co-operation of Sweden by forcing Spain to pay subsidies to her—Their equipments—They guarantee peace—The extension of the truce—Final difficulties overcome—The congress and the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle—New diplomatic situation of the Republic—A change of Alliances—The United Provinces the arbitrators of Europe.¹

THE invasion of the Netherlands by Louis XIV. placed the States-General under the necessity of choosing between the

¹ The principal work consulted for this chapter is *Négociations relatives à la Succession d'Espagne*, by M. Mignet, vol. ii., Part 3, Section 2, and Part 4, Sections 1 and 2; the documents found there being supplemented by the Archives of the Hague, and by the able memoir of M. Combes (1864) on the unpublished French correspondence between John de Witt and Sir William Temple, relative to the Triple Alliance.

alliance and the proximity of France. The Grand Pensionary had foreseen this dire extremity. When he received at his house some years previously the Cardinal de Retz, then exiled from France, he had foretold the events which already appeared to him inevitable, saying that, whatever pains he might take to maintain the friendship between the republic and the King of France, it was evident that she would be forced to oppose him and lay herself open to his resentment.

Louis XIV. was on the verge of provoking this crisis. He had taken up with the ardent ambition of a conqueror the projects of aggrandisement which Mazarin had bequeathed to him, and which were destined, by the annexations of the possessions remaining to Spain in the north of his kingdom, to insure the preponderance of France in Europe. The death of Philip IV. gave him the pretext for which he was waiting publicly to announce his claims, and it would have needed but little to induce him to enforce them at once by violence.

Nevertheless, after much hesitation, as testified by his memoirs, he seemed willing to content himself with diplomatic measures to obtain satisfaction; but the court of Madrid having given him to understand that it could not entertain them, he made arrangements to conquer the inheritance which he coveted. The war between England and the United Provinces seemed to favour the execution of his projects: 'the two neighbours most concerned in the defence of the Netherlands being deep in a quarrel between themselves.' He would not, therefore, wait for the conclusion of peace to commence his enterprise, but resolved to precipitate it, profiting by the exhaustion of the two rival powers.

The prosperity of France and the exhaustion of Spain left him at liberty to hazard anything. The state of the revenues, and of the army and navy under the direction of such ministers as Colbert, Lionne, and Louvois, left nothing to be desired.

Order had been re-established in the finances under the energetic administration of Colbert, and the receipts nearly doubled although the taxes had been reduced. 'The revenues are sufficient for all expenses,' writes the ambassador of the States, 'the farming is so much improved that it brings two

millions a month into the king's treasury and the "Taille" thirty-two millions a year.' The increase of the public revenues, which had risen to ninety-five millions, had tended to encourage trade and commerce, whilst it had developed the military power of the kingdom. The navy had acquired an importance hitherto unknown. Lionne, to whose department it belonged, had given it full play. In 1667, it consisted of 110 ships carrying 3,713 guns, and manned with 21,915 men, exclusive of officers. The land force, disciplined, organised, and equipped by Louvois, 'the Colbert of war,' had been considerably increased. It consisted of 72,000 men, divided into 600 companies of infantry, and 120 troops of cavalry. The French guard, and the Swiss, gave them in addition a picked body of 6,500 foot soldiers; and the king's household, including the body-guard and the musketeers, with the gendarmes and the light cavalry, furnished a reserve of about 2,000 men. The improvement of the infantry arms and the construction of some powerful artillery also contributed to prepare for the success of a new war.

In view of the expedition which he was meditating, Louis XIV. had collected 50,000 men in the two provinces nearest to the Netherlands and counted thus upon an easy victory.

The skilful direction given to French diplomacy by Lionne enabled the King of France to lay down the law for Europe, which seemed resigned to accept it. The Pope, Alexander VII., himself set the example of submission. Not having made what appeared a sufficient reparation for the violence offered to the Duke de Créquy, the French ambassador, by the Corsican guard, he only avoided an occupation of Rome by the French troops, by humbly submitting to such atonement as was imposed upon him. Leopold, Emperor of Germany, threatened by an invasion of the Turks, owed the safety of Austria only to a French army corps which arrested the Ottoman conquest by the glorious victory of St. Gothard. As to the King of England, Charles II., Louis XIV. had nothing to fear from his enterprises, since he had obtained from him at the cost of five millions the sale of Dunkirk, one

of the keys of France; and the war which he had declared against him, in favour of the United Provinces, was too harmless to provoke his resentment. All obstacles which might have been opposed to the conquests of the French king were henceforth removed.

Spain had lost what France gained. 'Tis like a great old tree which has lost its branches and leaves, *et trunco non frondibus efficit umbram*,' writes a diplomatist of the time. She had worn herself out in the sanguinary and obstinate war, which she had maintained against the United Provinces to keep them under her yoke, and had spent upon it nearly eighty millions sterling. Her revenues, far from sufficing for her expenses, did not exceed eighteen million reals, in spite of the wealth she drew from America, and only brought twelve millions into the treasury. Her frontiers were exposed to the enemy, her fortified towns were in bad condition without garrisons or provisions, her fleets had vanished from the seas, her dockyards were empty. Trade had fallen off in the towns, while the fields remained uncultivated. Spain was, as it were, buried alive. 'It is impossible that, in such a condition, the kingdom should last another century,' was the verdict of the first Cortes, assembled by Philip IV.; and one of the councillors of the regent, the Duke Medina de la Torrès, said in the council, 'If in the past we could plume ourselves on being conquerors, we are now in danger of being conquered.' The death of Philip IV., by exposing Spain to fresh dangers, reduced the Spanish monarchy to the last extremity. Philip IV., who had allowed it to go to ruin in his feeble hands, left as his successor a child of four, so fragile that it had not seemed likely to survive him. His natural son, Don John, who had distinguished himself at the head of the Spanish army in Italy and Flanders, had fallen into disgrace; it was therefore to Philip's widow, Queen Maria Anne of Austria, sister of the German Emperor Leopold, that the regency was confided.

He had instituted for her assistance a council or junta of regency, composed of six members; the Count of Castrillo, president of Castille, justiciary of the kingdom; Don Christoval

Crespi, Vice-Chancellor of Aragon; the Cardinal of Sandoval, Archbishop of Toledo; the Cardinal of Aragon, Inquisitor-General; the Marquis d'Ayetona, representing the grandees of Spain; and the Count de Peñeranda, Councillor of State. The first act of the Regent was to appoint a new councillor, her confessor, Father Nithard. She obliged the Cardinal of Aragon to give up to him the office of Inquisitor-General, and soon gave him the direction of the government, although he had none of the qualities which would have fitted him to be prime minister.

The Netherlands was the possession of the Spanish monarchy which was chiefly threatened. Having no efficient support to hope for from Spain, they could offer no opposition to any aggression. The governors who had succeeded one another since the Archduke Leopold had either been unable to put the country in a state of defence, or had neglected to provide for its security. The Marquis de Castel-Rodrigo, appointed three years before, had bravely set to work to extricate them from this embarrassment, and to resist the French invasion which he foresaw. Nevertheless, in spite of the demands for money and troops which he never ceased to make to Madrid, he had but twenty thousand men at his command, distributed amongst all the garrisons, and could only count for support upon the German regiments furnished by the Court of Vienna. 'If the French attack us in the spring,' he writes, 'I see nothing short of a miracle which can save these provinces.'

Too confident in his own courage and activity, Castel-Rodrigo thought he could dispense with allies. Believing himself to be equal to the public demands, in spite of the gout which frequently confined him to his room, he was jealous of possessing the whole authority in political as well as in military affairs. He thus deprived himself of the aid of the Prince de Ligne, the greatest noble of the Netherlands, whose disgrace had turned the Flemish nobility against him. He had also hitherto held at arm's-length the only clever and experienced officer at the disposal of Spain—the Count de Marsin, a former companion in arms and lieutenant of Condé,

alienated by the Fronde from the service of France, and to whom the Court of Madrid had confided the command of the troops in the Netherlands. The Spanish province thus abandoned seemed a prey offered to the first comer. Spain at this juncture had found two diplomatic defenders of her cause: one in her own service, the other in the service of the Emperor of Germany—Don Estevan de Gamarra and Baron Lisola. Don Estevan de Gamarra, Spanish ambassador at the Hague, had held the principal military commands in the Spanish armies. He had been raised to the rank of Major-General, and had been made governor of the citadel of Ghent. Sought after and appreciated as a negotiator, he was aided by a great affability of character, and much acuteness of mind. 'His cheerful and open disposition made all intercourse with him pleasant and agreeable,' wrote a French ambassador who had known him well, 'and however much our interests were opposed, we lived together in perfect freedom and intimacy.' But he had not hitherto been able to turn the course of events, and had made vain efforts to wean the United Provinces from the French Alliance.

François de Lisola also gave proofs of rare energy and activity, joined to great talents as a writer. He was born in 1613 at Salins in Franche-Comté, and was therefore a Spanish subject, but in his early youth he entered the service of the Emperor of Germany, who, after having employed him in the most important negotiations, sent him in turns as ambassador to London and to the Hague, giving him the title of Baron. He had early drawn attention to the dangers of the French power, and had confided his apprehensions to the Grand Pensionary of Holland, thus entering upon the path which he followed to the end of his life: that of a resolute and determined adversary of the domination with which Louis XIV. threatened Europe. Kept informed by secret communications which he had contrived with all the courts, even with that of Louis XIV., of all the projects and manœuvres of French diplomacy, he did not have recourse to futile intrigues to baffle them. His plan, which he carried out, was that of a coalition against France.

The cry of alarm which was raised on the publication of his first pamphlet, 'The Buckler of the State and of Justice,' successively translated into all languages, made a great sensation. He published it in answer to a manifesto entitled, 'Treatise on the rights of His Most Christian Majesty over the divers States of the Spanish Monarchy,' which Louis XIV. had just published. Renouncing all concealment, the King of France audaciously asserted the right of the Queen his wife, not only to profit by the law of devolution, by which she would receive a portion of Philip IV.'s inheritance, comprising the greater part of the Netherlands, Franche-Comté, and Luxembourg, but also, in the event of the death of Charles II., to the inheritance of her brother's kingdom, in spite of the renunciation which she had made of her claim to the succession. To dismember the Spanish monarchy before it fell vacant, and to possess himself of it when Charles II. should have ceased to live, was the insatiable ambition of Louis XIV.—who threw down the gauntlet, as it were, to Spain and Europe. Lisola made a decided repudiation of these claims, in which he put forth all his legal knowledge and controversial eloquence in the service of a righteous cause. His memorial, which does honour to the political literature of the time, broke down all Louis XIV.'s arguments, and victoriously put an end to all controversy on the subject. Lisola contested as unjustifiable all claim on the part of the King of France to extend the law of inheritance of paternal property, as applying to the children of a first marriage, to the sovereignty of the state. He proved by incontrovertible arguments that the law of devolution could not legally avail the Queen of France as daughter of Philip IV.'s first wife, but must remain exclusively applicable in civil cases. He finally laid it down that the Netherlands being united to Spain, where the law of devolution was unknown, must be subject to the law of that kingdom, and he ingeniously pleaded in favour of his argument the Salic Law, which in France superseded all others; so much so that none of the provinces successively united to the crown could be again detached, in spite of any rights of which the daughters might

otherwise have availed themselves. He wound up with the reminder, made with the authority of good faith, that the Queen's formal renunciation had been the condition of the Peace of the Pyrenees, and that to refuse to recognise its validity would be to infringe all principles of public rights. He pointed out plainly that Louis XIV. was engaging in no civil action, but was only seeking some pretext for the violation of a treaty. 'The course of a lawsuit,' he said, 'did not allow of warfare, contracts were never fought out with the sword, nor a first summons made with forty thousand men. But it is only too clear that the King of France wishes for no arbitration but that of arms; he makes his throne a tribunal, and his soldiers judges.' Lisola wound up his memorial by pointing out without any reservation the danger of conquest which threatened all courts and all people. 'Let us then make common cause,' he adds, 'and not put all our faith in the favour of the Cyclops; which only profited Ulysses by an unhoped-for piece of luck.' He thus appealed beforehand to the European league, which was later to serve as a barrier to the encroachments of Louis XIV.

But until this appeal was responded to, diplomatic memorials would do little for the defence of Spain—Lisola's answer to the manifesto of the King of France was not published before Louis XIV. had recourse to arms. His military preparations being finished, the pacific assurances with which he had up to the last hour deluded the Spanish Government, seemed to be no longer necessary. As soon therefore as an order only was required for his troops to cross the frontier of the Netherlands, he sent notice directly to the Queen-Regent of his intention of occupying before the end of May the provinces which he claimed in the name of the Infanta Maria Theresa, his wife. The only course left open to the Spanish Court to avoid spoliation was a voluntary abandonment. 'Here is a change of scene,' writes Lionne to the Archbishop of Embrun, the French ambassador at Madrid, 'which will make some disturbance in your court.' While Philip IV.'s widow to try to gain time declared herself 'ready to seek means of accommodation,' the King of France had rejoined his

army, which he had placed under the command of Turenne, and four days before the end of May he entered the Netherlands as a conqueror.

To reassure Europe, Louis XIV. spoke of his invasion as a journey which he was undertaking to enter into possession of the countries belonging to him. He made preparations as for a festival, and at the head-quarters at Amiens, where the Queen had come to join him, to show herself to her new subjects, the reviews were intermingled with grand balls at which the royal tent was arranged like a reception-room at Versailles.

Nevertheless no military precautions had been neglected. Two divisions, each of eight thousand men, had been detached to resist any opposition, one under the command of Marshal d'Aumont between Lys and the sea, the other under the orders of the Marquis de Créquy on the frontier of Germany; and it was with the third corps, thirty-five thousand strong, that the King of France opened the campaign. He misled the enemy by moving towards Charleroi, which had been evacuated, and by threatening Brussels, so as to oblige the Marquis Castel-Rodrigo to recall his best regiments for the defence of the capital of the Netherlands. This feigned attack having attained the proposed end, Louis XIV. suddenly turned towards the Scheldt, and two weeks sufficed for the Flemish fortresses of Ath, Tournay, Douai, Courtray, and Oudenarde to fall into his hands after a defence more apparent than real. The inundation of the approach to Dendermonde having saved that place, which was the key to Brussels, Ghent, and Malines, the royal army arrested its victorious march, and redescending the course of the Scheldt, besieged Lille, where it was joined by the division under Marshal d'Aumont.

Lille was defended by a garrison of two thousand five hundred foot and six to seven hundred horse, commanded by brave and able officers, and by fifteen hundred of the burgher guard, who had promised the governor, Count de Brouay, to stand by him to the last. They were, moreover, expecting help from an army corps of twelve thousand men collected at

Ypres by the Count de Marsin, to whom the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo had made a tardy appeal. But the work of investment under the direction of Vauban was conducted with such activity that the hopes of the besieged were shattered. A week sufficed to open a double line of trenches; at the end of a fortnight the two demi-lunes which stood in the way of an assault were carried after an obstinate resistance, and the townspeople, faithless to their oath, called upon the governor to surrender. Upon his refusal, the people ran to the ramparts, stopped the firing, and Lille opened her gates to the King of France, who made a triumphal entry. The Spanish cavalry, which the Count de Marsin had brought up for the succour of the besieged city, only arrived to see the fall of the town, and, after a futile attempt at resistance, was dispersed and driven back with great loss on the frontier of the United Provinces.

Louis XIV. thus made himself master of a line of places which, strengthened by Vauban, would give France what he called 'her iron frontier.' Notwithstanding her late preparations for defence, Spain seemed incapable of disputing with him that part of the Netherlands which he had not yet conquered. Leaving the army under the command of Turenne, he rejoined the Queen, who had preceded him to Arras, and went with her to Saint Germain in the beginning of September, 'accompanied by the acclamations of his people, and the admiration of the entire kingdom.'

Notwithstanding the iniquity of an enterprise in whose favour only legal subtleties could be invoked, Louis XIV. had, in executing the great designs of Henry IV. and Richelieu, made use of his ambition for the furthering of the power and glory of France.

This conquest, threatening for Europe, was still more to be dreaded by the Republic of the United Provinces. It placed it, according to Van Beuningen, in the greatest peril it had ever encountered. 'Flanders once in the power of Louis XIV.,' writes Temple, 'the Dutch feel that their country will never be more than a maritime province of France.'

He was not mistaken. If the Netherlands passed under the French dominion, the United Provinces would assuredly be ruined or conquered. Antwerp once become a French town, the closing of the navigation of the Scheldt, on which depended the wealth of the Dutch commerce, could not fail to be again an open question. It was easy to foresee that Louis XIV. would not tie himself down by that clause of the treaty of Münster which had been wrung from the feebleness of Spain, and the republic would henceforth find itself exposed to an irreparable disaster. Moreover, the invasion of the Netherlands by the King of France laid open the United Provinces to the same fate. It was to be feared that, once the Spanish succession open, the King of France, proclaiming himself heir to Charles V. and Philip II., would claim them in turn as former possessions of Spain. Moreover, the pretensions which Louis XIV. was now making to Brabant, of which a part had been ceded by Spain to the republic, were sufficient, however cautious he might be, to alarm the States-General.

Their apprehensions were the more justified that the King of France had refused to enter into any engagement either to enfranchise the Netherlands and constitute them an independent republic or to divide them with the United Provinces. In spite of the skill which the Grand Pensionary had shown during the negotiation of a treaty which had been always evaded, he had obtained no more than the promise of a preliminary agreement. He had persistently confided in it, and would not be discouraged by the little reassuring news which was constantly re-echoed in his correspondence with Paris and Brussels. 'I know,' he wrote to D'Estrades, 'that this State would be very willing to assist the pacific intentions of the king your master, by an agreement between his Majesty and the King of Spain, and for myself individually there is nothing I would not do to second the counsels of those who might support any moderate proposals of his Majesty. He will, no doubt, lean towards all that may best exhibit his justice and generosity, and will reflect that at the present conjuncture of affairs he can no longer defer his overtures to his most attached friends and allies, who are convinced that he will act

in concert with them in this important matter in accordance with the assurances which he has given.'

These illusions had been followed by a cruel disappointment. When Louis XIV. thought that he had no further need of their support, he abruptly put an end to the measures of policy which he had hitherto made use of. Before giving orders for his troops to take the field, he wrote to Count d'Estrades to leave Breda, where the French ambassador had gone to take part in the negotiations for peace between England and the republic. He ordered him to return immediately to the Hague, and to give notice to the States-General of his resolution to unite the Netherlands to his kingdom. To justify this undertaking, D'Estrades was commissioned to distribute amongst them copies of the memorial setting forth the Queen's rights. He was at the same time to reassure them by persuading them that the King of France would content himself, in return for their neutrality, with that part of the Netherlands which did not touch their frontiers.

This communication, which embarrassed D'Estrades, was overwhelming to John de Witt, who was the first to receive it. Although he was beginning to be uneasy, he had not expected such a frustration of his hopes, and when, on Sunday, May 15th, 1667, D'Estrades communicated his despatches to him, the Grand Pensionary, 'although he did not lose control over himself, could not conceal his surprise and dismay.' He reminded him of Louis XIV.'s last promise to undertake nothing without the knowledge of the States-General. He protested against the eagerness with which the King had resolved to precipitate a rupture, instead of applying to the States who would have been quite ready to assist him in procuring satisfaction from Spain. The French ambassador, disarmed by these remonstrances, was forced to explain to De Witt that the King had fulfilled the promise of a preliminary agreement between the two governments, by sending to the United Provinces the first communication of the manifesto which had announced the taking of the field by his troops.

The assembly of the States-General, of whom he demanded

an audience on the next day, May 16, shared the sentiments of the Grand Pensionary. They listened with equal astonishment and irritation to the letter which Louis XIV. addressed to them, and announced to Count d'Estrades, through their president Claes Kann, the deputy of Friesland, that they would deliberate on the answer to be sent. The ambassador of France was to learn, as he recognised later, 'that there was nothing that the members of the States would not undertake rather than that the Netherlands should belong to the king,' 'for they cannot be convinced,' he adds, 'but that if that occurs, their republic would be lost in a couple of years.'

To arrest Louis XIV.'s conquests the States-General had need of allies, but they found themselves alone. Engaged in a war with England which was exhausting their resources, they seemed reduced to be the impotent witnesses of the French invasion, unable to count upon any assistance 'to protect them against the rays of that sun which it is said intends to burn up all before it.'

By his able and farsighted measures, Louis XIV. had insured, if not indifference, at any rate inaction, on the part of Europe. Leopold I., Emperor of Germany, head of the house of Austria, brother-in-law of Charles II. the young King of Spain, and heir-presumptive to the Spanish monarchy, was specially interested in taking in hand the defence of the Netherlands. The victory of St. Gothard, gained by General Montecuculli, had saved him from the threatened invasion of the Turks, and obliged the Sultan Mahomet IV. to accept peace. But he was none the less forced to leave unanswered the urgent appeal of the court of Madrid.

French diplomacy, in fact, under the inspiration of Mazarin, had taken guarantees against the Emperor of Germany, even in the empire, by insuring the co-operation of a certain number of German princes whose estates were situated between Austria and the Netherlands. Louis XIV. had made use of their alliance for his own purposes by making them promise to refuse a passage across their possessions to the imperial troops. To complete his measures of precaution, he was paving the way for an insurrection in

Hungary, thus insuring the Emperor's neutrality by the threat of a dangerous diversion. He even attempted to bias him by offering him a share eventually in the Spanish monarchy. Though nothing came of this proposal at the time, the Emperor's chief advisers, won over by the French king's liberality, had received it favourably. Louis XIV. was not satisfied with depriving Spain of the assistance of the empire. He attempted to strengthen his alliance with the northern powers, Sweden and the Elector of Brandenburg, who were beginning to fear the dangers of the French supremacy.

To reassure them, he had given up the idea of placing the Duke d'Enghien, the son of the great Condé, on the Polish throne, and relied, in the event of the abdication of the king, John Casimir, on the candidature of the Duke of Neubourg. He counted, moreover, on the subsidies of France to force Sweden, if not to help him, at least to stand aloof. On the other hand, by winning over the Elector of Brandenburg's ministers by his bounties, he was successfully negotiating a treaty by which the Elector engaged to take no part in the war with the Netherlands. Lastly, in the south of Europe he took measures to prevent the conclusion of the peace which had been negotiated between Spain and Portugal. Although the treaty of the Pyrenees stipulated that France should cease to give assistance to Portugal, he nevertheless offered to the Court of Lisbon an offensive and defensive alliance which was eagerly accepted. He thus succeeded in keeping Spain in a state of perpetual alarm, which prevented all despatch of assistance to the Netherlands.

The King of England himself had been won over to the French policy. In declaring war against him, so that the United Provinces might not succumb to an unequal struggle, Louis XIV. had been careful to adhere to the appearance only of a rupture, and counted on reaping the reward of the consideration he had shown towards him. He had therefore confidently proposed to him a convention by which the two kings promised 'not to form any connections which would not be for their mutual advantage, for an entire year.' Charles II.

promised this in a letter written to his mother who was in France; and Louis XIV., satisfied with this declaration, transmitted a similar engagement to the Queen-Dowager of England. 'It is seriously to be feared,' writes the Grand Pensionary de Witt to one of his correspondents, 'that France will unite with England, with a view to the conquest of the Netherlands, for anything may be looked for in times when there is nothing but treachery and corruption.' Deprived thus of all help, and obliged at the same time to maintain a war against England, the States-General had but two paths open to them, to ally themselves with Spain, or to temporise with France.

If they allied themselves with Spain, they could not hope for the time being to gain over any of the other Powers, and they placed themselves in open rupture with France. Nevertheless, under the weight of their resentment and apprehensions, they would have attempted some interference in the struggle, at whatever risk, to give the signal of resistance to Europe, had not Spain repulsed them. Believing that the United Provinces had more interest even than herself in her defence, Spain maintained that she ought not to be called upon to make any sacrifice for the welfare of the Netherlands, and already regretted the proposals which the governor of the Netherlands had addressed to the States-General to obtain their co-operation. The former had just negotiated with them, through his first minister, Baron de Bergheyck, a plan for a defensive alliance. According to the terms of this convention, the States promised to assist Spain with a loan of three millions and a reinforcement of twelve thousand men, in return for the occupation of the towns of Ostend and Bruges and of a few fortresses on the frontiers of the Netherlands and the United Provinces, which they were to garrison. But the illusions which it pleased the court of Madrid to entertain, and the growing security which had been given to them by the check of the French expedition on the approach of winter, soon changed their mood. England also claimed, as the price of the assistance demanded of her by the Spanish Government, a cession of territory, so that Spain, forced to share the Netherlands between the King of France and her two allies,

would have been, as the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo ironically observes 'chastised with three rods at once.' According to the latest instructions given to him, he declared himself only authorised to pledge the forts and revenues of Waas, already devastated by the French troops.

The States-General were incensed at so absurd a proposition. As soon as they saw that Spain was trifling with them, they refrained from taking any further steps, and De Witt sent word to the Spanish ambassador at the Hague, Don Estevan de Gamarra, 'that if his masters had no other friends than the States, they might boast themselves of having none at all.'

The indecision of Spain served the policy of the Grand Pensionary, who feared as a desperate measure any sudden rupture with France. His political programme is summed up in the following sentence in a letter which he wrote later, to the ambassadors of the States-General in England, Meerman and Boreel: 'To abandon Spain is to make France a present of the Netherlands; to take her defence upon ourselves alone would be folly. There only remains therefore conciliation.' De Witt was determined not to give way to opposition, and to prevent the French dominion extending over the Netherlands. But on the other hand, he was too prudent not to consider that the republic would compromise herself without avail, if she could not insure the aid of powerful allies. He resolved to gain time by negotiations, at once the wisest and most sagacious decision. By so doing, it remained with the States-General to follow up the projects of agreement with Louis XIV. if the French king moderated his demands, and if the inaction of Europe obliged the republic to compound with him, whilst at the same time they remained at liberty to unite sooner or later with the other powers against him, if his ambition, exceeding all measure, should open the eyes of Europe to the danger of his conquests.

Louis XIV. himself favoured the Grand Pensionary's plan by putting an end to the campaign of the Netherlands before the weather forced him to do so. The taking of Alost by Turenne ended the expedition, which seemed therefore

postponed till the following year. 'Never were French ardour and promptitude less conspicuous than on this occasion,' wrote John de Witt to one of his correspondents. The wish to return to Versailles and enjoy the lustre of his triumph, would certainly not have sufficed to arrest the King of France in his enterprise, had he not thought it better to yield to political advice, and show unexpected consideration towards the States-General.

The first steps towards agreement had not yet been very cordially received by him in spite of the eagerness of the Grand Pensionary. Although the invasion of the Netherlands by the King of France appeared to be an infringement of the preliminary agreement which Louis XIV. had made with the United Provinces, De Witt had to some extent set aside his legitimate resentment, so as to leave open a way for negotiations. He had resumed his correspondence with Count d'Estrades, who, to put an end to disagreeable conferences, had returned to Breda. 'Those who have been assured by word of mouth and by letters,' he writes to him, 'that no active steps would be taken in regard to the rights of the Queen over the Spanish Netherlands, without a previous communication to them, and that nothing will be undertaken except in concert with them, and who, in consideration of this formal promise, have given a like assurance to those of the States most esteemed for their prudence and worth, now find themselves incapable of shaking off their distrust and effacing the disagreeable impression which they have received. In fact, they find themselves as much defrauded by the effect of these assurances as those who depended upon their statements and thought to have secured the required peace and safety. I therefore implore your Excellency to remind his Majesty of all that has passed on this subject, that he may still fulfil the promise, so solemnly made.' To give more weight to his demand he caused Louis XIV. to be informed 'that the States of Holland would willingly induce the States-General to interpose with Spain to obtain reasonable satisfaction for him, provided the King of France would openly state his intentions to them.' He urgently demanded from Louis XIV.

this proof of good faith: 'I implore you to be persuaded, and to impress upon the court, if necessary,' he writes again to D'Estrades, 'that the matter will not brook any further delay, and that I will set to work on all that depends upon me, so that we may come to an understanding in this important affair, unless it is made quite impossible to me by a longer retarding of the overtures for which we are waiting.'

Louis XIV. made no reply to these advances. In spite of the advice given him by Count d'Estrades, warning him that he was exposing himself to the imminent hostility of the United Provinces, he gave notice to his ambassador 'that he would not enter into any imaginary negotiations which would give the Spaniards time for defence, and bring foreign aid to the Netherlands.'

Nevertheless the Grand Pensionary furthered his proposals with such skill and perseverance that he succeeded in resuming the negotiations, whilst by charging Van Beuningen to offer to the King of France, besides Franche-Comté, the towns of Cambrai, Saint Omer, and Aire, he undertook to recall him to the projects of agreement to which the invasion of the Netherlands seemed to have given an irreparable blow. The peace between England and the United Provinces, which the French Government had vainly attempted to retard, and the negotiations for an alliance, which were rather suspended than broken off between the States-General and Spain, induced Louis XIV. to show himself less exacting. He did not consider Van Beuningen's offers sufficient, but he nevertheless showed a disposition to consider them. Renouncing his claims on the Netherlands, he contented himself with demanding the places bordering on the frontiers of France—Douai, Tournay, Bergues, Cambrai, Saint Omer, and Aire, and giving up the town of Lille which he had conquered, in exchange for a strip of territory which enabled France to advance in the Netherlands as far as Charleroi. He demanded as compensation that the Spanish Government should give up not only Franche-Comté but Luxembourg. He exacted, moreover, that the States-General, to make up to him for that portion of the Netherlands which he relinquished, should undertake to coerce

Spain, in the event of her not accepting the terms of the treaty, by giving France armed assistance.

The Grand Pensionary of Holland took care to evince no objection to these proposals, however inadmissible they seemed to him, and received them as a token of reconciliation. He considered the success of his policy as assured if he prevented the Netherlands from becoming French provinces. If only he could be secure of this, he was ready to make any concessions. With this view he only made some reservations, beginning by contesting Louis XIV.'s claims to Tournay, Charleroi, and Luxembourg, which, if abandoned to France, seemed to leave the Netherlands at his mercy.

Dreading, moreover, to find Louis intractable, should further successes encourage him to return to his ambitious projects, he demanded a suspension of hostilities during the time given to the court of Madrid to make known its determination.

The forethought of the Grand Pensionary extended even further. He was not content to limit the pretensions which Louis made to the Netherlands, before the Spanish monarchy fell vacant, but he wished to prevent his putting them forward when the death of the young and feeble King of Spain should allow the King of France to claim the inheritance of all his dominions. He also wished to secure to the United Provinces an engagement by which Louis XIV. should definitely renounce all portions of the Netherlands which were not now given up to him. To obtain such a declaration as would give the Republic a perfect security in the future, he offered to guarantee to him by a secret treaty the aid of the States, in the event of the succession to the Spanish monarchy being again reopened. He hoped, by means of this offer of eventual co-operation, not only to avert the imminent danger of the vicinity of France, but to prevent its ever recurring.

Louis, tempted by the hope of an understanding which would one day help him to the inheritance he coveted, and fearing, moreover, that too prolonged a silence would induce the States to enter into irrevocable engagements with his enemies, ended, after much hesitation, by desiring Count d'Estrades to

inform the Grand Pensionary of Holland that he had resolved to come to an agreement with him. He avoided all mention of giving up the Netherlands in the event of a re-opening of the Spanish succession, 'not wishing,' he writes to D'Estrades, 'to dig trenches which he would have eventually to cross.' But although thus reserving his liberty of action for the future, the King declared himself none the less ready to make concessions. He gave up all claim to Tournay and Charleroi, and only demanded Luxembourg in the event of the Spaniards preferring to keep Franche-Comté. To make his wish for conciliation more evident, he offered to content himself with the possession of the conquered places, and, wishing to leave no doubt of his pacific intentions, he consented to prolong to six months the three months' suspension of hostilities demanded of him.

This last proposal, however conciliatory in appearance, left the United Provinces, by the alternative offered, exposed to two dangers: the fear, still distant, of Louis XIV.'s claims upon the Netherlands, in the event of the opening up of the Spanish succession, and the immediate necessity of a rupture with Spain, if the negotiations did not tend to peace. This necessity was the more imminent that the King of France insisted upon the court of Madrid recognising the independence of Portugal. It would suffice therefore for Spain to refuse to come to an understanding with Portugal, for the United Provinces to be formally required to aid the King of France to possess himself of the Netherlands. The States-General would not consent to so compromising an engagement. They considered a rupture with Spain equally prejudicial to their political and their commercial interests. After the glorious termination of the war with England through the peace of Breda they found themselves more at liberty to resist the French claims. Doubting the sincerity of Louis XIV. they were ready to receive the offers of confederacy, skilfully renewed by the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo. 'Whatever the wisest among the government may wish in such a case,' wrote D'Estrades, 'they must follow in the ruck.' Those most opposed to France gave expression to this hostile feeling, even

claiming a fresh undertaking from Louis XIV., by the terms of which the French King, contenting himself with the fortresses he had conquered or proposed to acquire, should recognise as valid the renunciation he had made of the succession to the Spanish monarchy which had been the condition of his marriage with the Infanta Maria Theresa. Van Beuningen, the ambassador to the States-General at Paris, who had obtained leave of absence to return to the Hague, warmly encouraged this offensive policy, at the risk of compromising the last chances of agreement.

The Grand Pensionary of Holland was too prudent to risk making such a humiliating proposal to the King of France, knowing well from the haughty language held at Paris and the Hague by Lionne and D'Estrades that Louis would never consent to it. 'M. de Witt, whose greatness of mind and capacity are far above the ordinary,' wrote Lionne, 'saw at once that that string must not be touched by either party.' He further interposed with Van Beuningen to induce him to relinquish exactions which only served to irritate the King of France. By remaining faithful to the policy of conciliation which he had always followed, De Witt hoped to succeed in diverting Louis XIV. from his designs on the Netherlands. 'The Grand Pensionary,' writes D'Estrades, 'implores your Majesty to consider that such great affairs, involving so many interests, cannot be treated of without taking precautions which are not in use in kingdoms where the Sovereign's will decides everything.' According to his representations to the French ambassador, it was only at the cost of fresh concessions from Louis that he could prevent the States from demanding from him the renunciation of the Spanish succession, and assure him of their co-operation should it be opened. He also required that Louis should limit his claims to keeping his conquests, and content himself if he again went to war with forcing Spain to leave them to him, but should abstain from extending them. To prevent, moreover, the King of France from yielding to any temptation to break the peace when once made, he insisted that the clauses of the treaty which he proposed should be guaranteed by the States-General, and by such princes as

should offer their mediation. Such a project was a check to the hopes of Louis XIV. 'It took the game out of his hands,' wrote Lionne, 'by preventing him from profiting by the renewal of the war if Spain should decline peace.'

Nevertheless, in spite of the angry remonstrances which his ambassador was charged to address to the States, Louis recognised the necessity of showing at least some appearance of moderation. Fearing to make his intentions of renewing war too evident if he objected to a treaty of peace being guaranteed by other States, he declared himself ready to accept this latter condition. To insure the States-General, moreover, against any necessity of breaking with Spain, which they wished to avoid having forced upon them, he forbore to insist upon it, in the event of war being renewed in consequence of Spain refusing to grant peace to Portugal. He only demanded such a rupture in the event of Spain not consenting to relinquish to him that portion of the Netherlands which he had conquered. He went so far even as to make known to Count d'Estrades that 'to accommodate himself to the ideas of those with whom he had to deal, instead of pushing matters to a climax, he would be content to obtain from the States a promise of refusing a passage to any troops who might come from the German side to the aid of the Spanish possessions.' His only reservation was with regard to the demand made upon him to renounce the prosecution of his conquests in the Netherlands in the event of Spain refusing the terms of peace, and to forego his claims on that country should the death of Charles II. enable him later to make good his title to the Spanish monarchy. 'His Majesty,' he says himself, in the memorandum which he sent to D'Estrades, 'could not be supposed to be capable of such a mistake, as it would be to tie his hands for ever.'

It was upon this last condition that De Witt met with an unconquerable resistance from Louis. Hitherto, during the five months of negotiations which had just expired, he had managed so skilfully as to induce him gradually to abandon those claims which gave most offence to the States-General; and he still did not despair of gaining his cause, even if it were

at the price of fresh concessions. Renouncing for the time, in spite of Van Beuningen's remonstrances, any attempt at obtaining an engagement from Louis not to claim the Netherlands in the event of the Spanish monarchy falling vacant, he contented himself with endeavouring to shield them from his grasp, by obliging the court of Madrid to accept the proposals of the King of France, so as to force upon the belligerents the conclusion of peace.

The States of Holland, conforming their policy to his advice, resolved to inform the Spanish ambassador 'that they thought the offers of the King of France too reasonable to be repulsed with impunity, and that, in case of need, they would ask the States-General to have recourse to the most forcible measures to impose them upon the Spanish Government.' While this resolution was being referred to the Federal Assembly, De Witt undertook to represent to Gamarra that 'his masters could not allow a fire to be lit so near them, without trying to extinguish it.' On the other hand, the Grand Pensionary attempted to influence Louis by the offer of assistance, if needed, against all interference, should he consent in the event of a rupture with Spain to change the seat of war, and to follow up his conquests in Franche-Comté, Catalonia, Spain, and Italy, contenting himself with keeping those he had made in the Netherlands without extending them further. 'It is necessary,' he said to D'Estrades, 'whilst seeking security for the King, to look after that of the States, who could only feel themselves safe from His Majesty's great power, in the assurance that he would never be master of Flanders.'

Louis refused to enter into this engagement. He already regretted the concessions that he had made. He had proposed them in the hope that they would not satisfy Spain, and did not wish, if his prevision were justified, to defer the union of the Netherlands to his kingdom, being determined, if peace was refused to him, to profit by the renewal of the war to extend the frontiers of France. He therefore informed D'Estrades 'that in the event of the States being obstinately bent upon his carrying on his conquests elsewhere than in

Flanders, all negotiations must cease, and other measures be taken.' 'You saw by my last,' writes D'Estrades to Lionne, 'that I have deprived the States of all hopes of our withdrawing our troops from the Netherlands.'

The policy of the Grand Pensionary was thus held in check. He had flattered himself that he could guard the Netherlands against the French domination by obtaining a last concession from Louis XIV., and this guarantee had been definitely refused to him. Prevented thus from attaining the end he had never ceased to pursue, he was tempted to overstep it, by the alluring but dangerous idea of forcing the submission of that powerful monarch, whose conquests he wished to arrest. 'The welfare of the Republic,' he writes, 'lies in the alliances needful to her being confirmed as soon as possible.' It was in diplomatic negotiations with other States that he henceforth sought the success of his policy of resistance, and he found in the intervention of Sweden and England the support he needed against France.

Attempts at an understanding with the court of Stockholm had long been in operation, and the advances made had had a most favourable reception. They were the more opportune that the invasion of the Netherlands had weakened the ties which had hitherto united that court to France. Sweden certainly did not refuse the subsidies of Louis XIV., but would not become his vassal, and was provoked at the arrogance with which she was treated by Lionne, who had not hesitated to say that 'if the Swedes intended to give any trouble, means would soon be found to drive them back to their dens.'

The Grand Chancellor, Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie, had been hitherto the most potent ally of the French policy. He was of French origin through his grandfather, Queen Christina's favourite, and an all-powerful minister under Charles Gustavus, whose sister he had married. The minority of the new King, Charles XI., and the Regency of his mother, Hedwig Eleanor, Duchess of Holstein, made La Gardie master of the government. He had the entire direction of foreign affairs, and shared that of home affairs, with the four great officers of State—the Justiciary, the Lord Treasurer, the Grand

Constable, and the High Admiral. But he had to reckon with the Senate composed of twenty-five members, which had become a species of Grand Council. This assembly replaced the Diet, where the entire nation was represented by the four orders of the clergy, the nobility, the burghers, and the peasants, and whose vote was only required for extraordinary levies of money or troops. The Diet being only assembled at rare intervals, the Senate considered itself as the guardian of its authority. Kept at a distance by the late King, it had taken advantage of the minority to resume all its powers, and was gradually severing itself from the Grand Chancellor, whose influence was on the wane. Senator Biernklow, who owed his fortune to La Gardie, was now endeavouring to supplant him. He collected numerous partisans around him, who declared equal hostility against the Prime Minister himself, and his policy of union with France.

This situation was favourable to the negotiations which the States-General had again entered into with Sweden. To prevent that country from pledging itself to England, they had eagerly received the Swedish ambassador to London, Count Dohna, who had been sent to the Hague to settle the differences which had arisen as to trade between the two countries. The conference ended in a speedy agreement which satisfied the claims of Sweden. The concessions made by the States were the preliminary to a political alliance. It was prepared under the auspices of the two Senators, Biernklow and Sten Bielk, who had resolutely headed the opposition to France, and never ceased to point out the dangers into which Louis XIV. was thrusting all Europe. The French ambassador, the Marquis de Pomponne, vainly endeavoured to baffle their measures by his proposals. In return for the subsidies which he offered he only asked Sweden to consent to co-operate in the defence of the Treaty of Westphalia, by holding her troops in readiness, without necessarily making use of them. This agreement had been held in suspense by the absence of the Grand Chancellor, who had been detained for two months at his country house by a dangerous illness, thus leaving the sole direction of the government in his enemies' hands.

His return was favourable to the French ambassador's proposals, which were laid before the Senate, where they seemed likely to be approved of. During a renewed absence which he was imprudent enough to prolong, they were, without his knowledge, altered, and almost reversed.

He bitterly complained of this, accusing Biernklow of being in the pay of England. The most violent altercations ensued, and the Grand Chancellor, threatened with a suit by the Senate for slander, was nearly sending in his resignation. His departure for his estates on the occasion of the Christmas festivities left his enemies definitely masters of the field.

They renewed their design of associating Sweden in the defence of the Netherlands, and on their own sole responsibility, in the absence of the greater part of the court in the country, they gave directions to Count Dohna, who had remained at the Hague, to enter into any alliance which England and Holland were willing to make in favour of Spain.

The hopes of John de Witt were justified; he was right when he wrote to Count d'Estrades: 'The King of France will soon discover that he cannot very easily conquer the Netherlands, as a league of several States will be opposed to him.'

Nevertheless the United Provinces could not count on the co-operation of Sweden as long as they were not assured of an alliance with England. The reconciliation of the two countries had been first urged by Van Beuningen, when he was ambassador at Paris, and he had never ceased to press for a prompt conclusion of peace, so as to arrest the French King's conquests in the Netherlands. De Witt had also long recognised the interest of the United Provinces in this reconciliation. As soon as he heard from Van Beuningen that Louis XIV.'s entry into the Netherlands was imminent, he wrote to him: 'I cannot believe that England will quietly see France take possession of the Netherlands even if King Charles II. have entered into the most solemn engagement to that effect, persuaded as I am that the feeling of the entire English nation would force him to break it.' He said the same to Beverningh, and begged him to further, without delay, the success of the

negotiations confided to him at the congress of Breda. He assured him that, 'in spite of all appearance to the contrary, the English would in the end come to an agreement with the States, uniting with them in principles, which France would scarcely find agreeable to her.' 'The sympathy between the English and the French nations,' he adds, 'is not so great, nor the King of France's present designs so pleasant in English eyes, that either of the two can count on the continued friendship of the other.'

To draw nearer to England, it was necessary to begin by concluding peace. As soon as it was signed, De Witt hastened to profit by it. With this view, he urged forward the despatch of the ambassador, who was to represent the States-General at the court of Charles II., and obtained the appointment of one of the most devoted friends of his policy, John Meerman, burgomaster of Leyden. The new envoy of the States was full of ardour, and so confident in himself that one of the correspondents of the court of France said that 'he thought himself capable of filling the office of Governor and Captain-General of the Republic.' Accompanied by John Boreel, burgomaster of Middleburg, he started for London, announcing 'that he should endeavour to secure a close alliance with England, and that something would soon be heard of it.'

Whilst the Grand Pensionary took pains to reassure Count d'Estrades, by persuading him that Meerman would arrange everything in concert with Louis XIV.'s ambassador in London, the most urgent attempts were being made to persuade Charles II. to join the States against France, in the interests of a common defence. Meerman was directed to represent to him that he would force the States-General to treat with France if he did not come to the succour of the Netherlands, whilst by taking part with them he would find in Sweden and the German princes, allies, who were only waiting for a sign to declare themselves.

Charles II. was not to be so easily persuaded. He made it known through his ministers that the wound left by the late war was by no means healed, and that he must have time to recognise his new friends. Meerman replied: 'You will

take so long to find us out, that the time will have passed when your alliance could be useful to us, and the remedy will come too late.' The King admitted the advantages of the alliance, but said that his people mistrusted the Dutch. Besides, he said, the interest of the States-General being most at stake, England should wait until they had made the first move. 'When the King of France has made himself master of the Netherlands, there will still be a great fortress—the sea—which will separate him from England.' 'It is the States,' he added, 'who must take the first steps.' The French King's advances also contributed to prevent the King of England from entering into an agreement with the States. A few weeks after the treaty of Breda, Louis XIV. had sent to Charles II. an able diplomatist, the Marquis de Ruvigny, a member of the Reformed Church of France, and brother-in-law to one of the King's ministers, the Earl of Southampton, and who held relations both in court and in parliament favourable to the success of his embassy. He charged him with proposals for an offensive alliance. The Marquis de Ruvigny was to offer to Charles II. in return for the despatch of a corps of English troops to the Netherlands, assistance in vessels and money, which would enable England to wrest from Spain all or a part of her possessions in the West Indies. At the same time, according to the terms of his instructions, he was to insinuate to him, as a very strong reason for accepting this proposal rather than any other, that nothing could be better than to force the States-General to a desperate measure which would draw them into an immediate alliance with Spain, upon which the King of France would consider himself absolved from all obligations to assist them, in the event of Charles II. desiring to be revenged on them by the declaration of another war.

This treacherous advice could not be without its effect on Charles. Instead of entering into an agreement with France he proposed to compromise the States, by encouraging them in negotiations which could only rouse against them the irreconcilable enmity of Louis. This abrupt change of policy seemed suspicious to the ambassador of the Republic. 'I

fear,' writes Meerman from London, 'that the eagerness now shown to receive my proposals does but hide the intention of injuring the States with France.' The conferences held between the English commissioners, and the envoys from the United Provinces justified these apprehensions.

The English commissioners, after having long evaded the urgent demands for a mutual agreement which Meerman addressed to the court of London, now determined to obtain from the ministers of the Republic a declaration that the States-General would join their allies to oblige France, not only to renounce any further conquests, but to give up those she had already made, and to abide by the limits of the Treaty of the Pyrenees. 'It would be easier,' they said, 'to compel the French, by arms even, to make restitution, than to obtain anything from them by intercession or mediation.' Surprised at this language, and wishing to know what import they could attach to the new dispositions of the court of London, the ministers of the Republic asked the English commissioners 'if they might at once write to the States that the King of England was ready to exact a restitution of all his conquests from the King of France.' But the English commissioners, carefully avoiding the expression of any opinion, replied that they were only charged to find out what were the sentiments of the States, so as to make known to the King of England whether the former were disposed to combine with him in a war with France, adding that they could for the present give no answer. It was in vain that Meerman and Boreel reproached them with this conduct. 'From the very beginning,' they said, 'we have been open and candid, we only ask in return that the King should declare himself. It is useless to discuss means of execution before agreeing upon a plan of action.'

Charles, however, remained impenetrable. He maintained that the offers of the commissioners should have sufficed to inspire the United Provinces with perfect confidence, and refused to come to any explanation until the States had sent him their demands in writing. The duplicity of this conduct is sufficiently proved by a despatch written some days previously by the Marquis de Ruvigny, in which the

French ambassador communicated to Louis XIV. the draft of a treaty proposed by Charles II. for an offensive league against the States-General.

De Witt had been on his guard against this deceitful policy, and constantly impressed the greatest caution upon the ambassadors of the States. But he was none the less troubled with ever-increasing perplexities. 'I cannot make up my mind,' he writes to the Grand Pensionary of Zealand, 'as to what is best to do, or not to do, which I do not think has ever before happened to me during my whole period of office.' Resolved to check the advance of the King of France, he feared, in accordance with Meerman's anxious misgivings, 'to let slip any opportunity of rallying England to the interests of the States, and on the other hand he would not run the risk of driving Louis to extremities by pledging himself to England, before he was certain of the sincerity of the proposals of Charles's commissioners.

The impulse of the English nation to resist France and to ally itself with the United Provinces suddenly relieved him from his difficulties, and—according to the expression of a contemporary—'brought him light out of darkness.' Annoyed by the sale of Dunkirk, and irritated by the disasters of the last war with the United Provinces, public opinion in London showed itself as hostile as at the Hague to the conquest of the Netherlands.

'The jealousy is tremendous,' writes the French ambassador, on his arrival in England, 'and minds are so imbued with the old idea that the more feeble of the two powers must always be supported, by maintaining the balance between France and Spain, that it is to be feared that there is a general disposition to assist the Spaniards.'

'Common sense and the public welfare,' he writes again 'will not, they tell me, permit of their witnessing unmoved the conquest of the Netherlands, since it is easy to see that England would no longer be able to resist France, when the latter should have conquered all those provinces.' These sentiments were re-echoed by the parliament, which had been sitting again for two months, and which the

Emperor of Germany's envoy, Baron Lisola, was stirring up by his intrigues in the cause of Spain. The downfall of the Chancellor and Prime Minister, Clarendon, seemed to give the signal for a new policy. Tired of his domineering, and finding in him a troublesome censor of his amusements, Charles was ready to sacrifice the faithful servant who had been his companion and counsellor in his evil fortunes, and had deprived him of the seals. The House of Commons, led by the Duke of Buckingham, and in which all the Chancellor's enemies were leagued against him, had precipitated his ruin. It violently attacked his administration, and drew up a bill of attainder against him in seventeen clauses. It accused his foreign policy, which it considered too favourable to France, as well as his home policy, which gave satisfaction neither to the popular party nor to that of the court. In spite of the protection of the Lords, who found no charge sufficiently established against him, Clarendon, threatened with being brought before a commission, from which he could only expect condemnation, and yielding to the urgent advice of the Duke of York, his son-in-law, who found himself incapable of defending him, took the course of leaving the kingdom to which he had eight years previously brought back the son of Charles I.

By his retirement to France he anticipated the decree of banishment which was pronounced against him, and which left him to die in exile.

Henry Bennet, created Earl of Arlington, to whom the direction of foreign affairs passed on the fall of Clarendon, could only win the confidence of parliament by outwardly following a more popular foreign policy. Being married to a Dutchwoman, a daughter of Beverwaert, formerly ambassador in London, he was favourable to an alliance between England and the States-General, although he still hesitated to 'bell the cat.' Parliament imperiously demanded this alliance, and complained of the prolonged indecision of the King. 'Some of its members,' wrote the ambassador of the Republic, 'went so far as to say, that his wish to flatter France would make him as much hated as the

Chancellor Clarendon.' Charles II., not daring to resist this feeling, made up his mind to yield, though much against his will. He began to withdraw himself gradually from Louis XIV., and to show himself more exacting. Not satisfied with refusing him his co-operation, he made it a condition of the neutrality of England that Ostend and Nieupoort should be ceded, and that war should be declared by France against the United Provinces. Louis refusing to consent, if England remained neutral, to cede to her any part of his conquests from Spain, and not choosing 'out of respect for the honour of the treaties,' he proudly writes, 'to declare himself the enemy of the States, before they gave him any cause for a rupture,' Charles seized the pretext to yield to the popular impulse. He resolved to propose to the States to join with England against France, and the better to ensure the success of this negotiation he confided it to Sir William Temple.

No one was more capable of bringing it to a successful issue. Born in London in 1628, and brought up at Cambridge, Temple, having completed his education by travel, established himself in Ireland, in the midst of his family. He lived in retirement until the Restoration, enjoying at his ease the domestic happiness which he owed to his marriage with Dorothy Osborne, a daughter of the former governor of Guernsey under Charles I. He profited by his leisure for the study of history and philosophy, and thus acquired those qualities as a writer, which have given so bright a lustre to his name. He was as much esteemed for his character as for his talents. Frank and open, opposed to all ostentation, impervious to corruption, he had that sense of honour to which the court of Charles II. professed a shameful indifference. The Restoration opened to him the path of public life. As a member of the Dublin parliament he became acquainted with the Duke of Ormond, one of the most upright of the new king's ministers, who had just been made lord-lieutenant of Ireland. The recommendation of the Duke of Ormond insured him the confidence of the Lord Chancellor, Clarendon, and diplomacy seemed to offer the most favourable field for his abilities.

He was sent to the Bishop of Munster to gain his adhesion to the English alliance in the war with England against the United Provinces. The skill and experience of which he gave proof united to his natural gift for observation, soon pointed him out for a more important post. He was appointed resident at Brussels, and Louis XIV.'s invasion of the Netherlands procured him the principal part in the negotiations. He became from the first a defender of that policy to which he always remained faithful—that of resistance to France, whose domination he considered as a threat of subjection to all Europe.

He began by reviving the failing courage of the governor of the Netherlands—the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo—who, on hearing of the taking of Charleroi, was disposed to quit Brussels and retire upon the citadel of Antwerp. Being asked to take the initiative, Temple told him that he would not be the first to leave, having orders to remain at his post, and he thus kept him in the capital, to prevent its surrender to the conquerors. Bent upon the arrest of the French invasion, Temple constantly represented to his government how dangerous a conquest of the maritime province by France would be for England, and he energetically demonstrated the necessity of a prompt understanding with the States-General. 'It would be,' he writes to Arlington at the commencement of Louis XIV.'s campaign in May 1667, 'the best revenge that could be drawn from the game which France is playing in engaging us in the last war against the United Provinces.' Five months later he laments that the projects for an alliance are still in abeyance. 'I leave to those who are in the ministry,' he says, 'as well in England as in France, the care of taking the wisest and most necessary measures to bring about a reconciliation before it is too late.'

His wishes were necessarily encouraged by his relations with the Grand Pensionary. John de Witt's renown had made Temple impatient to be acquainted with him, and he went to pay him a visit during a journey which he made to Holland, without any official mission, with his sister, Lady Giffard. 'The sole object of my stay here,' he writes in introducing

himself to him, 'is to see the things most considerable in your country, and I should lose my credit if I left it without seeing you.' De Witt, who was already interested in Temple's favour by the reports addressed to him by the ambassadors of the Republic, was sensible of the compliment, and replied with a cordial sincerity which gained him the confidence of the English diplomatist. The two statesmen soon came to an understanding as to the causes which had placed England and the Republic at variance, and which De Witt attributed to the 'mischief-making of Downing.' They congratulated themselves on the re-establishment of peace between the two nations, and the Grand Pensionary of Holland, whilst 'keeping himself sufficiently at arm's-length,' gave Temple to understand how much he wished that he could trust England after what had occurred in Flanders. Temple retired delighted with this conversation, declaring 'that anyone negotiating with M. de Witt should follow a straightforward path, without refinements or false colouring, or the offering of a shadow for the substance.' The esteem and sympathy which he felt for the simplicity of his life, and the frankness of his character, with which he was the more charmed that he was accustomed to the greedy luxury of Charles II.'s ministers and the dissimulation of the Spanish ambassadors, guaranteed beforehand the success of their diplomatic relations, so that when a policy favourable to an understanding with the States-General prevailed in the councils of Charles II., he found himself appointed to negotiate the conclusion of the treaty between the two governments.

Towards the end of December, Temple received orders to leave Brussels and go to London, taking the Hague on his way. It was only another plot to which the King of England had recourse as a last attempt to detach the States from France without being forced to enter into any agreement with them. He thought that John de Witt's confidence in Temple's sincerity would enable him to trifle with the Grand Pensionary with impunity. Temple, who was equally deceived, entered eagerly into the mission with which he was charged, and which satisfied all his wishes. Arrived at the Hague, he

pressed De Witt, in accordance with his instructions, to tell him whether the States would consent to an offensive and defensive league against Louis XIV. De Witt was not imposed upon by these advances, but remained on his guard, and stood faithfully to his programme, seeking no other guarantee than such as would preserve the Netherlands from conquest, and resolved, if he could obtain that, to abide by the French alliance. At the first interview he hastened to thank Temple for the communications with which the King of England had charged his envoy, but he did not conceal that, instead of being questioned, he expected to receive an answer. Pressed to say what course the United Provinces would take, the Grand Pensionary held to the resolution made by the States of Holland the preceding month, according to the terms of which they only intended to offer their mediation, and, if necessary, to enforce it. He merely added that to make it successful the negotiators of the Republic must also be made aware whether the real co-operation of England would be insured to them. Temple replied that he was not authorised to pledge his government, and that his only mission was to ask for the promise of the States. He urged him to be explicit as to the offer of an offensive league, giving him to fear that, should the Republic refuse, England would enter into an agreement with France for a share in the Netherlands, and even for the dismemberment of the United Provinces. De Witt, without affecting a confidence in the Kings of France and England which he no longer possessed, still refused to give way to his suspicions, and renewed his declarations that the States would only join in a mediation on the condition of the proposition coming from England. He thus avoided, not only a rupture with Louis XIV., but any compromising of the understanding between the Republic and France, and determined to maintain his reserve as long as England did not declare herself, thus scrupulously conforming his conduct to all the rules of political prudence.

Forced to recognise that the States would enter into no agreement, until the co-operation of England was guaranteed to them, Temple suddenly made other overtures to De Witt

for the purpose of satisfying himself that there was no secret project of treaty between France and the United Provinces. He asked whether the States would be opposed to the King of England's intervention in favour of Spain to recover from Louis XIV. that portion of the Netherlands which the King of France had conquered. Having received this proposal in silence, De Witt, in a further meeting, showed himself rather favourable than otherwise. But Temple had to be satisfied with this liberty of action left to the King of England, and to renounce any hope of the assistance of the States, in the event of Charles, instead of contenting himself with a mediation between France and Spain, declaring war against France.

The account of this mission, faithfully reported by Temple to Charles II. who had sent for him, put an end to the king's indecision. No longer able to evade the satisfaction demanded of him by public opinion, he declared his resolution to ally himself with the States-General, and to accept their proposals. On the next day but one, Temple re-embarked, and after a stormy passage, found himself again at the Hague, happy to be the bearer of full powers to conclude the alliance between England and the Republic.

The very day of his arrival, he went straight to the Grand Pensionary and begged that they might resume their conferences without any useless formalities. The two negotiators easily came to an understanding on the meaning and terms of their last interviews. Temple assured De Witt that the King of England had resolved to make proposals in conformity therewith and promised to co-operate with the States in a mediation between France and Spain. He added that Charles made only one condition, that of a defensive alliance between England and the States, to which it seemed to him the Grand Pensionary could not object. De Witt showed himself both satisfied and surprised. He feared that this unexpected readiness on the part of the King of England might hide some snare. He could not but assent to the offer of mediation in which he had himself taken the initiative, but he hesitated about entering into a defensive alliance. 'He asked himself,' he said, in allusion to the recent war between England and the Republic, 'whether

the late wounds from which the two countries had suffered so severely, were sufficiently cured to allow of their being completely closed.' He would not, moreover, too openly show his distrust of France, not yet having perfect confidence in the intentions, hitherto so vacillating, of the English Government, whom he reproached with never having for two successive years followed the same policy with regard to the United Provinces.

Temple undertook to reassure him. He represented to him that once the States were associated with England in a project of mediation, they were interested in securing the benefits of a defensive alliance. In fact, if they were determined to arrest the conquests of France in the Netherlands, they must expect to bring resentment upon themselves which they were bound to guard against. Further to persuade De Witt, Temple represented to him that according to the assurances of the ambassador of the United Provinces in London, the example of England could not fail to be followed by Sweden and the other States. He renewed his protestations as to the King of England's sincerity, guaranteeing equally that of his ministers, and only withdrew when he had disposed of the last of the Grand Pensionary's scruples.

In a second conference, Temple approached a no less delicate question. The conclusion of the treaty depended upon the rapidity and secrecy with which the negotiations were carried on, but the States-General could enter upon no fresh agreement without the preliminary consent of the provincial states, who required no less than a month or six weeks for deliberation. This long delay would inevitably leave the French ambassador at leisure to foil a project so contrary to the interests of the King his master. To avoid this danger, Temple proposed that the States-General should themselves undertake to conclude the treaty, contenting themselves with sending it for approval to the provincial states. He added that otherwise there would be an end of the negotiations.

De Witt at first thought this expedient impracticable, and represented that the constitution of the Republic offered an

obstacle which could not be overcome. He declared himself obliged to respect the rights of the provincial states, without whose approbation the States-General could make no valid treaty, and pointed out the danger to which the States-General would expose themselves if they exceeded their powers. Temple was not discouraged. He renewed his entreaties that the treaty might be preliminarily accepted and conferences held, in which he would take part with any commissioners appointed by the States who would afterwards be invited to sign it. He assured the Grand Pensionary that all might be arranged in four or five days, and urged him to consider the misfortunes to which the Republic would be exposed if, from too great respect for formalities, the States-General would not undertake to dispense with the preliminary vote of the provincial states. He warmly represented to him that the deputies of the provinces in the Federal Assembly, far from having to fear a disavowal of their proceedings, would, on the contrary, be rewarded by the popular gratitude.

The Grand Pensionary took the advice of those members in whose fidelity he could trust, and finding it more favourable than he had anticipated, hastened to inform Temple. Encouraged by this communication, Temple asked the very next day for an audience of the States-General. He told them he was charged by the King his master to make proposals advantageous to both countries, and asked them to appoint commissioners with whom he could treat. This proposal being accepted, the States granted full powers to a commission of seven members, who represented each of the seven provinces: MM. de Gelicum, d'Asperen, Crommon, Amerongen, Unkel, Coeverden, and Ysbrandt. The Grand Pensionary was associated with them on account of his rights of office, and thus held the direction of the negotiations. On the following day, Temple, who had entered into an arrangement with De Witt, opened the conference with the commissioners, and submitted to them the project of an offensive and defensive alliance, as a condition of mediation. De Witt, always having in mind the caution he wished to observe towards France, once again tried to evade this proposal, and keep to

the mediation. Temple, forced to remain faithful to his instructions, was inflexible.

The commissioners showed great indecision. After having three times retired to consult, they finally gave their consent to the proposal of Charles's envoy, charging De Witt and Ysbrandt to arrange with him as to all the conditions of the alliance. They only exacted that the King should confirm, under the head of maritime treaty, the articles inserted as provisional in the Treaty of Breda which concerned the interests of navigation and commerce, so that they might not be exposed to a renewal of those disputes which had brought about the last war between England and the Republic. At the next day's conference, Temple pointed out to De Witt and Ysbrandt the danger of leaving the negotiation in suspense, and urged them to proceed without waiting for Charles II.'s reply to the commissioners' last demand. He represented the importance of baffling the manœuvres which were being attempted to induce Charles to give preference to an alliance with France over that with the United Provinces. But De Witt nevertheless declared that the States could not give up the guarantee of the maritime treaty. Impatient to overcome this difficulty, Temple proposed an expedient which was agreed to. He showed the two commissioners the letter which he was writing to the King of England, pressing him to satisfy their demand, which was soon granted, and urged that the work of the commission should be finally concluded, undertaking to complete the treaty in conformance with the demands of the States as soon as he should receive Charles's reply, of which he declared himself certain. De Witt consulted Ysbrandt by a glance, and holding out his hand to the English negotiator, told him that he had sufficient confidence in him to ask no other pledge than his word. Temple, on his side, consented to the stipulation that Spain should be constrained to make peace in the event of her refusing to entertain Louis' last proposals, De Witt thus insuring an absence of any aggressive appearance in regard to France, and hoping thenceforth to win all while risking nothing.

Satisfied with his work, he showed no less eagerness than

Temple to press on the conclusion of the negotiations. In a new conference held during the night, from 11 to 1 o'clock in the morning, in presence of all the commissioners, the draft of the treaty, translated from French into Latin, was adopted entire. The most sincere congratulations were exchanged on both sides, and the Grand Pensionary spoke for all when he said to Temple, 'À Bréda comme amis, ici comme frères.' The following Monday, after a final interview, which lasted four hours, the articles were again read, and the formalities of registering, signing, and sealing duly accomplished. The same day the States-General approved, without debate, of the proceedings of their negotiators.

Within a month the States of the provinces, whose vote had been reserved, sent in their ratification of the resolution adopted by the Federal Assembly, and submissively followed the example which the States of Holland had hastened to give them. Public opinion had become an irresistible influence carrying away with it all obstacles.

The negotiations carried on by Temple with the envoy-extraordinary of Sweden at the Hague had not been without their influence in bringing about so speedy a solution. Christopher Delfique, Count Dohna, was worthy from his character to be associated with men like Temple and De Witt. His family feelings as well as his political opinions, made him favourable to an alliance between England and the United Provinces. A nephew of the Princess-Dowager and born in Holland, he had sought his fortunes in Sweden, and had obtained there the rank of major-general. The fact of his belonging to the Calvinist religion, of which he was a faithful disciple, had prevented his entering the Swedish senate, into which Lutherans only were admitted, and he had sought in diplomacy a field for his talents. 'In a big, heavy body,' writes a contemporary, 'he possessed great gifts of mind and intellect, and the knowledge which he had acquired of the use of arms had not prevented his training himself in politics.' He did not conceal his antagonism to Louis XIV., who had forcibly dispossessed his brother from the government of the principality of Orange, wishing to unite it to France, and he

impatiently awaited an opportunity of gratifying his family resentment. Having, moreover, taken an active part in the conferences of Breda, in which Sweden had played the part of mediator between England and the United Provinces, he was eager to complete this work of pacification by a still closer understanding between the two now reconciled countries.

The Grand Pensionary, who had no hope of abruptly breaking off the ties of the old alliance between Sweden and France, had hitherto shown some reserve towards Count Dohna. The latter, on his side, as a near relation of the young Prince of Orange, had avoided any close intimacy with the head of the Republican party. Immediately on his arrival at the Hague, Temple undertook to associate him in the negotiations which he had just concluded with the States-General. At one of the first conferences which he had with De Witt he proposed to go and see Count Dohna, setting aside all ceremony, 'wishing,' he says, 'to ascertain whether the Swedish minister had any powers to engage the Crown in any common measures for the safety of Christendom, being persuaded that if by such a conjunction we could extend it to a triple alliance among us, he would find it too strong a bar for France to venture on.' With this idea, Temple went to Count Dohna, dispensing with all diplomatic preliminaries to his visit. He entered without being announced, and excused his proceeding by saying that his master's interests required that they should put themselves in direct communication with each other. Touched by this frankness the Swedish minister embraced him, and promised to treat him with the same cordiality. Temple, satisfied with this assurance, gave him an account of his negotiations, and added that the alliance of Sweden with England and the United Provinces would guarantee their success. He also pointed out to him the importance of the position which Sweden would regain in Europe by this intervention.

Count Dohna, flattered by these advances, lent a favourable ear to this communication. He acknowledged that his instructions allowed of his taking part for his government 'in all matters concerning Christendom,' but he added that he

could not, without special authority, enter into the agreement which was proposed to him. Nevertheless, knowing the feelings of the Senate in Stockholm, he promised that, in the event of an alliance between England and the Republic, he would do all he could to associate his government with it.

To show the importance which they attached to the co-operation of their new ally, the States-General in conformity with the resolution of the States of Holland agreed that the treaty should reserve the right of the King of Sweden as a principal contracting party in the engagements entered into between Charles II. and the States. Count Dohna hastened to profit by this declaration. Having obtained a promise of subsidies in the event of Sweden intervening for the defence of the Spanish Netherlands, he conditionally ratified the treaty, subject to the approval of his government, and, with that reservation, signed it within three days. The name of 'The Triple Alliance,' which has adhered to it since, might properly be given to it from this moment.

The treaty consisted of three clauses. By the first a defensive alliance between the contracting powers was stipulated for. The one who should be attacked had the right of claiming from the other forty vessels, 6,000 infantry, and 400 cavalry, or an equivalent subsidy—advances which were to be repaid three years after the termination of the war. The second and third clauses, of which one was public and the other secret, regulated the intervention of the two powers, which was justified, according to the declaration in the preamble, by 'the fear that the conflagration recently kindled by the rupture between the two crowns might be communicated to their neighbours if it were not extinguished at its birth.' In the public agreement the contracting powers adhered to the conditions of peace offered them by Louis XIV. They bound themselves to insure their acceptance by Spain, if necessary, by force; but they declared themselves mutually agreed to obtain from the King of France a truce until the end of May, which would give them time to persuade the Spanish Government to negotiate. They, moreover,

interdicted all conquests over the Netherlands to Louis XIV., even in the event of the refusal of Spain.

The secret clause was summed up in four articles. In it the contracting powers pledged themselves to use their good offices to procure peace between Spain and Portugal, which latter France had never ceased to succour. They stated that they had come to an agreement, either to insist upon the renunciation by Louis XIV. of the Spanish succession by the new treaty which he might conclude with Spain, or, at least, to prevent the insertion of any contrary clause. Lastly, they mutually agreed to declare war against the King of France, in the event of his not keeping to the conditions which he had proposed, and they undertook to continue it until they had despoiled him of his last conquests in Flanders, and re-established the position made for the two kingdoms by the Treaty of the Pyrenees.

Peace seemed to be thus assured, and even if it could not be obtained, the equilibrium of Europe was none the less guaranteed. By forcing Spain to abandon the places she had allowed to be taken from her, 'The Triple Alliance' gave Louis XIV. that satisfaction with which he had declared he would remain content. By not permitting him, on the other hand, to extend his conquests to that part of the Netherlands of which Spain was not yet dispossessed, it shielded the United Provinces from the dangerous vicinity of France. The policy so determinedly followed by the Grand Pensionary de Witt thus gained its end. He owed it to his understanding with Temple: 'All Christendom,' he writes to him later, 'owes you the glory of having first disposed the King of Great Britain to so strict an alliance between His Majesty and this State, for the universal good and peace of Europe.'

He gives him the same testimony in a letter written by him to Arlington in these commendatory terms: 'You cannot send any minister here, more capable, or more adapted to the tastes and spirit of this nation than Sir William Temple. He should be no less satisfied with the promptitude with which the States have concluded and signed the treaty for which he came here than they are with his behaviour, and the admirable

manner in which he has conducted himself throughout the negotiation. It would seem that you are a judge of men, and that you only give your friendship to those who merit it, since you find means to employ those who so worthily acquit themselves.'

Temple deserved this flattering opinion. By the boldness of his measures he had overcome seemingly insuperable obstacles. By hastening the issue, through the intervention of the States-General, instead of allowing it to be referred to the States of the provinces, he had cut short delays which would have ruined everything. He had, as De Witt said, 'performed a miracle.'

With a modesty which does him honour, Temple himself accounted for the success of his mission: 'They will needs have me pass here for one of great abilities, for having finished and signed in five days a treaty of such importance to Christendom. But I will tell you the secret of it. To draw things out of their centre, requires labour and address to put them in motion; but to make them return thither, nature helps so far, that there needs no more than just to set them agoing. Now I think a strict alliance is the true centre of our two nations. There was also another accident which contributed very much to this affair, and that was a great confidence arisen between the Pensioner and me. He is extremely pleased with me and my sincere open way of dealing; and I, with all the reason in the world, am infinitely pleased with him upon the same score, and look upon him as one of the greatest geniuses I have known, as a man of honour, and the most easie in conversation, as well as in business.'

This common work of the two ministers once accomplished, public satisfaction was freely expressed in the United Provinces. The Grand Pensionary, wishing to show his participation in it, gave a banquet, to which were invited the young Prince of Orange, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, and most of the foreign ministers and their wives.

The ball which followed was opened by the Prince of Orange, and the dancing was continued by the Grand Pen-

sionary, who, according to a report of the time, 'achieved a great success.' The Prince of Orange was no less eager to celebrate an alliance which appeared to him to be so favourable to his cause by bringing together the United Provinces and his uncle, the King of England. He gave a fancy ball to over eight hundred guests, and acted the principal part in an allegorical prologue, intermingled with entries of fabulous personages, the principal ones being Apollo and the Muses, and Neptune and the Tritons. The external security, which the Republic believed to be thenceforth insured to it by the protection of its new allies, gave a national character to these rejoicings and helped to justify them.

It was over the King of France that the diplomatic victory, upon which the United Provinces prided themselves, was won. It checked him abruptly in the execution of the plans which he had conceived, at the very moment when he thought their success was infallible. The treaty which he had just concluded with the Emperor of Germany gave him reason in fact to imagine himself master of the destinies of Europe. Perseveringly returning to a negotiation which he had already begun, five months before his entry into Flanders, he had proposed to the Emperor Leopold an agreement for the regulation of the eventual inheritance of the King of Spain, without taking into account the renunciation he had made of it in the Treaty of the Pyrenees. This arrangement, made so secretly that it has only quite lately been discovered, had been the work of Chevalier de Gremonville, the French ambassador at Vienna, who by his clever audacity had ended by ruling the Emperor and his ministers. Whilst the Triple Alliance was being negotiated at the Hague, and four days before it was concluded, Gremonville, at a last audience, obtained the Emperor's consent to the division of Charles V.'s monarchy with the King of France. In consideration of the share left to the Emperor, Louis XIV. claimed for himself, besides the Netherlands, which were the principal object of his ambition, Franche-Comté, Navarre, the Philippines with the stations on the coast of Africa, Naples and Sicily. He thus secured for the future, in the event of a vacancy on the throne of Spain, not only

the neutrality, but even the complicity of the sovereign who seemed most interested in resisting him.

Having to so great a degree insured the speedy aggrandisement of his kingdom, Louis XIV. struck a fresh blow at Spain, which still refused peace. The Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, had even haughtily repulsed the offer of a truce, replying that 'he had no need to accept as a favour a suspension of hostilities which God Himself and the winter would necessarily impose.' Perhaps he hoped, by thus tempting Louis to continue the conquest of the Netherlands, to force the States-General to come to the assistance of Spain and to engage in a war against France. Louis was on his guard against this danger, and in again taking up arms to overcome the resistance of Spain, he meant at any rate to re-assure Europe by his apparent moderation, as well as to astonish it by the success of a new campaign. Anxious to prevent the coalition which was being formed between the United Provinces and England—and of the conclusion of which he was still in ignorance—and, since his treaty with the Emperor of Germany, awaiting with more patience the annexation of the whole of the Netherlands, he resolved to make himself master of Franche-Comté. This populous and fertile country, which was only attached to Spain by artificial ties, formed a threatening encroachment on the French soil, and placed the eastern frontier at a distance of forty leagues from the capital, from which it was equidistant with the northern frontier. Completely to re-assure the States, whom he thought it for his interest to treat with consideration, the King of France went so far as to let them know that he did not mean to profit by the conquest he was going to undertake in order to change the pacific overtures which he had made, being ready to surrender Franche-Comté if Spain relinquished the portion of the Netherlands of which he had possessed himself. It was an agreement which he had no doubt flattered himself he could evade: 'since no one could imagine,' writes the King of England's minister, Arlington, 'why the King of France should take the trouble to take more towns merely to restore them again.' His preparations, completed by the indefatigable activity

of Louvois, the Secretary of State for War, gave him complete confidence; and the winter season, which seemed to stand in the way of a new campaign, had allowed of their concealment. The Prince of Condé, governor of Burgundy and former conqueror of Spain, who had long been in disgrace, was appointed to command the expedition. Proud of again taking his place at the head of the French armies, he gradually collected in the province a body of 15,000 men, announcing that he was going to send them to manœuvre in Catalonia. He also had the condition of the fortified towns, and the number of troops available for the defence of the Spanish province, secretly investigated. The towns were almost all incapable of offering the slightest resistance. The troops were reduced to 2,000 men of the regulars, and the 10,000 militia distributed amongst the different garrisons of the province included many young artisans, who, with no means beyond their pay, had neither the habits nor tastes suited for warfare.

It sufficed to enter Franche-Comté to subdue it. Confident in the success which awaited him, Louis XIV. started suddenly in the middle of the winter from St. Germain, as if about to assist at a military promenade. After having ridden eighty miles in five days he rejoined his troops, who, during his rapid journey, had nearly reduced the province to submission. Two fortresses, Salins and Besançon, had already thrown open their gates, and Dôle, the capital of Franche-Comté, seemed only to have prolonged its resistance four days that it might await the arrival of the King of France, to whom it sent the keys. The parliament, which was sitting, took the oath of allegiance to him and went so far as to declare guilty of treason those former subjects of the King of Spain who refused to recognise their new sovereign. The capitulation of Gray was the last blow to the Spanish dominion, and the governor, the Marquis d'Yenne, who had failed to take measures for defence, hastened to make his submission. 'All that has happened,' writes Lionne to D'Estrades, 'is past belief.' A fortnight had sufficed to give, as by magic, a new province to France. The Spanish Government, con-

founded and humiliated by the overwhelming success of an invasion which they attributed to treason, scornfully declared that so great a king would have done better to send his footmen than to come himself to take possession of such a conquest.

While he was thus making his power felt and promising beforehand not to take advantage of it, Louis XIV. suddenly received news of the Triple Alliance. It required him to leave to Spain that portion of the Netherlands which he had not yet conquered. The speedy issue of the negotiations concluded at the Hague had baffled the intelligence he could usually count upon in his diplomacy. The perspicacity of Count d'Estrades had been foiled. John de Witt's declarations had reassured him. The Grand Pensionary had only communicated to him the last resolutions of the States, which insisted upon the necessity of forcing Spain to accept the proposals of peace, and he skilfully avoided laying any stress on the demand to be made upon the King of France to content himself, either with his conquests in the Netherlands, or with the acquisition of Franche-Comté, according to the alternative which Louis had himself offered to Spain. D'Estrades, being informed of the arrival of Temple at the Hague, had written that the projects for an offensive alliance against France, encouraged by the English ambassador, had not been approved by the Grand Pensionary, and he had paid no attention to any other proposals which might be settled between them. Instead of being put on the alert by the conferences entered into by the negotiators, he had announced that 'it would all end in smoke, and the King his master might snap his fingers at it.' Convinced that the constitution of the United Provinces, which imposed such slowness on the resolutions of the States, would give him time to baffle all diplomatic manœuvres, he was quietly awaiting the decision of the Assembly of the Provinces, never imagining that the States-General would take upon themselves to conclude a treaty. On the very eve of the signing of the Triple Alliance he had replied to those who would have had him fear the conclusion, 'We will talk of it again six weeks hence.'

Accordingly, when, on the day following the signing of the treaty, De Witt and Temple went to inform him of it, although he was still in ignorance of the articles which were to remain secret, he could not conceal his surprise and annoyance. He complained of impediments put in the way of the King's further enterprise against the Netherlands if Spain should refuse to yield, and threw out a hint that if there was any attempt at coercion, the King his master would not flinch, even if it caused a forty years' war. He, moreover, reproached the States who were the King of France's closest allies with having entered into fresh alliances without giving him any previous notice, and suggested the danger of his master's resentment. Nevertheless, to avert Louis's displeasure, Count d'Estrades was careful to modify in his despatches the bearing of the treaty which he had neither foreseen nor prevented.

In spite of the blame which he thought himself bound to lay upon the States, he attempted to exonerate them. 'Many of my friends amongst the members,' he says, 'have been hurt at the way in which I have spoken to them about this alliance. I am not sorry to leave them under such an impression, as it might contribute to induce them to give up things which they would not do if they thought the King was satisfied.' 'I should tell you,' he writes to Lionne a month later, 'that nothing can be better to all appearance than the way in which Holland has acted,' and he more than once renewed this assurance, which he wished to impress upon the court of France. So that, whether Louis XIV. were deceived, or merely wished to pretend not to observe the affront offered to him, he at first showed no irritation.

'To tell you my own individual feeling as to what has taken place,' wrote Lionne to D'Estrades, 'the basis appears to me good and advantageous to the King; the disagreeable style and the terms in which it is drawn up might certainly have been improved upon, but the sequel will show whether the intention is good or bad.'

The Grand Pensionary was also careful to maintain the circumspection necessary to be shown towards Louis XIV. Once the independence of the Netherlands guaranteed, his

only interest was to oblige Spain to give satisfaction to France, so as to prevent a renewal of a war, which the States were interested in diverting from their neighbourhood. He thenceforth undertook to reconcile the policy of concession with that of resistance, setting in action all the resources of diplomacy to prevent the King of France from taking offence at the engagement between the Republic and their new allies. The very day of the signing of the Triple Alliance he thus gives notice of it to one of the most active negotiators in the employment of Louis XIV., Prince William of Fürstenberg: 'I think I can inform you with certainty that the King of England has allowed himself to be persuaded to unite with this State, and to bind himself with us to assist France in the acquisition either of the towns she conquered in the last campaign, or of an equivalent for the surrender of those towns, an equivalent with which His Most Christian Majesty has declared that he will be contented.'

De Witt was the more ready to address himself to the Prince of Fürstenberg, that the latter had been sent by Louis XIV. to the Hague to submit to him the draft of a treaty for a peace with Spain, and it was to this treaty that the Grand Pensionary wished to seem to conform in negotiating the Triple Alliance. To persuade the King of France of this, De Witt represented to Count d'Estrades 'that it had not been possible to insert into the treaty the clause for a rupture with Spain, in the event of the court of Madrid refusing to accede to the proposals for peace, on account of the difficulties which some of the provinces would have made and from the necessity of an agreement with England.' But he added that the States would nevertheless obtain the conditions of peace for Louis XIV. as proposed to Spain. 'I have seen the deputies of Holland,' writes D'Estrades, 'and they have assured me that if they see any signs of England favouring the interests of Spain by not exacting from her the acceptance of the offers of France, Holland will break the engagement she has entered into with her, having it always at heart above all things to preserve the King's friendship.'

The sincerity of the Grand Pensionary's declarations is

clearly evinced in his correspondence with Temple. Urged by England to complete the engagements of the Triple Alliance by the conclusion of an offensive league with Spain against France so as to force Louis to make peace, in case of his refusal De Witt, far from encouraging this aggressive policy, tried to divert the English Government from it. 'Now we comprehend very well,' he writes, 'that such a concert and such a league as His Excellence desires would put the King of France upon an absolute necessity of continuing the war, because, if he should comply after such a league made with his enemies, it would appear publicly that he was obliged to it by this bond and consequently by his enemies themselves.' Whilst holding himself in readiness for an energetic intervention of the States against France should Louis show any intention of continuing his conquests, he was anxious not to seem to provoke him.

To be prepared against the resentment which they feared, the States-General hastened to send Van Beuningen back to France, as he had been well known and appreciated in his first embassy. His instructions were to follow out a policy of conciliation. He was to represent to Louis XIV. that if the States entered into a treaty with England it was to enforce peace upon Spain in the event of the King of France's offers not being accepted. 'M. de Witt assures me,' writes Count d'Estrades, 'that your Majesty will be satisfied with the conduct of the States, as soon as M. van Beuningen shall have informed your Majesty of all particulars on the subject of his mission.' Van Beuningen was careful to do all in his power to insure himself a favourable reception, and on the very day of his appointment to the embassy wrote to Lionne 'how much he had it at heart to be employed in obtaining recognition of his masters' good-will.'

The States could not give a better proof of it than in sparing neither pains nor efforts to make Spain yield, and thus prevent a renewal of the war. 'They were determined,' wrote De Witt, who thus gives in a few words his political programme, 'not to be led by the will of the Spanish Government, and as if out of mere wantonness, into a course which they

only intended to follow in the event of a fatal necessity.' The task was not easy. It was necessary almost to use force to Spain in order to save her. Spain had been the victim of an unjust aggression undertaken in spite of the renunciation of the King of France to the inheritance of the Infanta, his wife, and she could not consent to make the best of a bad business and preserve the rest of her possessions by the abandonment of some towns in the Netherlands. Preferring the continuation of war to the conclusion of peace, she wilfully blinded herself, and 'was always waiting,' wrote a Swedish envoy, 'for something of the nature of what she calls miracles to extricate herself.' Guaranteed by the Triple Alliance against the total loss of the Netherlands, she fancied she could with impunity refuse the sacrifice which was demanded of her. Although she was reduced to an impossibility of defending herself in the Netherlands or elsewhere, she hoped that the Powers who had just signed the Triple Alliance would not look on at her ruin.

In this conviction the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, Governor of the Netherlands at Brussels, who had obtained full powers to negotiate, instead of making use of them, opposed all concession and never ceased to encourage resistance by the court of Madrid. Having vainly tried to compromise the States and the Grand Pensionary with the King of France, in the hope of provoking a rupture, and having equally without success attempted to cut them off from England, so as to come to a direct understanding himself with Charles II., he set himself to protract the negotiations which the United Provinces were carrying on at Brussels. The States-General were there represented by two of their members, Burgersdyck, Pensionary of Leyden, and Van der Tocht, Pensionary of Gouda, who, according to the testimony of a contemporary, were wanting 'neither in ability nor in assurance.' They were enjoined to act in concert with the English ambassador, Temple, who was charged with the same mission. But the conferences only served to perpetuate the disagreement. 'They are not suited to one another,' writes Temple to De Witt; 'the Marquis is of a temper to face death rather than allow himself to be overmastered in the conduct and management

of affairs, and your members are only fit to be employed in places where you reign supreme.' The intentional dilatoriness of Castel-Rodrigo and the impatience of the negotiators for the States renewed each day the scenes of discord. Temple describes the scene in vivid colours in a letter to Arlington of March 16, 1668: 'The Marquis,' he writes, 'is not the easiest of access, nor the quickest at dispatch: and his officers are at the same rate; the Dutch deputies are all upon the spur, and, when they demand an audience or a paper, if they have it not within half an hour they say the Marquis is trifling with them, and write at once to the States that he is only making delays, wishing thereby to involve them in war. They reason him to death upon every point. The Marquis, who used to owe no man anything in that kind, grows ten times more difficult by that time they have talked an hour than he was at first, and engaging in long discourses gives them twenty occasions of growing warm upon the place and wise afterwards by interpretations that God knows were never in the case; so that, in their audiences, between the Marquis' eloquence and their Leyden philosophy the cards commonly run high, and all is pique and repique between them, and I am to go to one and t'other next day to set all right again, and endeavour to make them agree upon points which they could by no means agree upon together.'

This conciliatory intervention of Temple and the resolute firmness of the Grand Pensionary ended by triumphing over the hesitation and ill-will of the Spanish Government. 'Spain cannot now embroil us with France in spite of ourselves,' writes De Witt to Meerman, the ambassador for the States in England, and we will apply to them, if necessary, these words, *Cuncta prius tentanda, sed immedicabile vulnus ense recidendum est*: 'Everything must be tried first, but then if necessary we must use the knife.'

Having made up his mind to obtain perfect satisfaction for the King of France rather than allow him to undertake to get it for himself, the Grand Pensionary informed the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo 'that if needed, to put an end to his intolerable hesitation, the States army would occupy Flanders as

an enemy.' Wishing to prove that this was not an empty threat, the States addressed a similar communication to the King: 'M. de Witt has assured me,' said D'Estrades, 'that the States and England will give the Marquis no peace until he has consented, and if he will not they will break with him.' According to Temple, 'Spain must either go out by the door, or jump out of window.'

Once convinced that he would have to yield, Castel-Rodrigo resigned himself to submission, and—as the deputies of the States wrote—'was dragged like a victim to the altar.' He began by consenting to the truce which Spain was so manifestly interested in accepting, and the refusal of which had cost him Franche-Comté. After many evasions he at last consented to prolong it till the end of May, according to the proposals of England and the States, who in the interests of Spain held to the continuation of the negotiations. He was in reality receiving a favour, but, with his usual haughtiness, he wished to appear to be making a concession. Not being satisfied with the mere suspension of hostilities, the allies further exacted that the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands should agree to accept the terms of the King of France, who proposed either to keep the conquests he had already made in the Netherlands, or to receive as compensation Franche-Comté, with Aine, St. Omer, and Cambrai.

To evade a definite answer, Castel-Rodrigo gave them to understand that he accepted the alternative, without saying which of the two offers he chose.

After a delay of ten days, he decided on the course least expected. Contrary to the wishes and provisions of John de Witt, he made up his mind to leave to the King of France the towns of the Netherlands of which Louis had already made himself master: Charleroi, Alt, Oudenarde, Tournay, Courtrai, Douai, and Lille. He would thus obtain the restitution of Franche-Comté, which, if taken from Spain, would cut him off from all communication with Lorraine and the Empire. Relinquishing as hopeless the towns which served as barriers to the Netherlands, henceforth dismembered, Castel-Rodrigo thus revenged himself on the States, whom he

could not forgive for having forced peace upon him, condemning them in the future to constant alarms, by exposing them to the vicinity of Louis XIV. He flattered himself, moreover, that he had made the final conquest of the Spanish Provinces an irresistible temptation henceforth to the King of France. The fear of such an attempt would, it seemed to him, suffice to keep the Republic of the United Provinces and England to the offensive league which they had secretly guaranteed to one another, if France refused to make peace. 'The Marquis hated the peace,' writes Temple, 'upon either of the alternatives, and desired nothing but the continuance of the war, with the assistance of England and Holland.' Moreover, the governor of the Netherlands was persuaded that in accepting the terms of Louis XIV. he forced the King to withdraw from his engagements, and this idea was not far from being justified.

After having been accepted with a very ill grace by Spain, peace was very near being refused by France. The two negotiators of the allies at Paris—Van Beuningen for the United Provinces, and Sir John Trevor for England—had to overcome a series of obstacles before they succeeded in their mission. Louis could not be indifferent to the Triple Alliance, and, notwithstanding his first promptly dispelled illusions, he had soon recognised the blow given to his ambition. Some vague information as to the secret articles having reached his ears, he vainly demanded their tenor from De Witt. The Grand Pensionary replied that he had sworn not to divulge them to anyone, whereupon D'Estrades intimated to him 'that the King would find them out by other means, without any obligation to him.'

Being informed by a communication from the Marquis de Ruvigny, his ambassador in England, of the conventions of the allies, the French King's resentment broke out on the subject of the article of the secret treaty in which they stipulated that, should Louis XIV. refuse their proposals for peace, they would attack him by land and sea until France was brought back to the limits prescribed by the Treaty of the Pyrenees. He considered this convention as an affront,

although it had never been intended to be made public, and was not to take effect if he remained satisfied with his last offers, and he made use of it to justify his irritation on finding himself checked by the Triple Alliance in his designs upon the Netherlands. 'The behaviour of the States,' writes Lionne, 'would try the patience of the most moderate man in the world. Imagine, then, the effect it must have upon the heart of a great monarch, who places his honour before any other consideration, and cannot endure to seem forced by his fears to do that which he would have been ready to perform of his own accord, in order to acquire the glory of moderation.' According to the declaration which the French ambassador at the Hague was commissioned to transmit to the Grand Pensionary, 'his master was too great a prince, and too jealous of his honour, to submit to the will of the States.' Anxious to reinstate himself in the King's good graces by humouring his feelings of resentment, Count d'Estrades assured him that he need have no fears of a war. 'The combined league,' he writes to Lionne, 'will not be ready to take their armies into the field under three months, and the King will have plenty of time to work out his great scheme.'

Louis XIV. met with similar encouragement from his generals. The Prince of Condé and Marshal Turenne represented to him that the allies would be taken unawares, and promised him the entire conquest of the Netherlands before the end of the campaign; and the King of France showed much disposition to evade the proposals of peace, either by taking advantage of the shiftiness of Spain, or by similar conduct on his own part. Van Beuningen, in his uneasiness, went so far as to accuse him 'of having the designs of a Cyrus or an Alexander.' The military preparations justified the fear of a rupture of the negotiations, and the signal for the renewal of hostilities seemed given by the taking of the little town of Genappe, which opened the way to Brussels. 'Orders have been sent to all the army corps,' writes the English envoy Sir John Trevor from Paris, 'and it is a deadly sin here to talk of peace.'

It was not only the exhaustion of Spain and the supposed

powerlessness of her new allies that inspired Louis XIV. with confidence. He hoped to separate them and so easily break through their agreement. Count d'Estrades, being commissioned to instil distrust into the States in regard to the King of England, by making them doubt Charles's fidelity to their cause, showed the Grand Pensionary a letter from the French ambassador in London. It announced that Charles had sent to Louis by Arlington a copy of the secret articles of the Triple Alliance, a piece of information which De Witt in his own good faith refused to believe. To make a more decided impression upon the Grand Pensionary's mind, by causing him fresh anxiety, Lionne writes to D'Estrades: 'I have private information that there is an understanding between the Emperor's minister Lisola and the English ministers, to engage the States to take some action against the King, and thereafter to leave them to bear the weight of the burden alone. It is easy to understand that, once this has occurred, the cabals against M. de Witt would have a fine opportunity of establishing the Prince of Orange, and of ruining M. de Witt. It is for him, who is so clever, to judge whether or no there is a chance of this project succeeding, and of the means he must take to prevent it.' These communications, which were confirmed by after events, were made in all sincerity, but they seemed to be so much in the interests of France, that De Witt might well consider them suspicious. He had, moreover, too much greatness of mind to allow himself to be turned aside by party interests from the end which he had in view of placing the independence of the republic beyond attack, and his readiness to sacrifice his interests to his duty would not permit him to leave the United Provinces at the mercy of a too powerful neighbour.

Faithful to a policy from which he had never swerved, the Grand Pensionary was impervious to any intimidation, and followed with his accustomed perseverance the path he had traced out for himself. He had paved the way for the success of the negotiations by forcing Spain to yield, and he completed it by showing the King of France that the United Provinces would not allow him to continue his conquests with impunity.

He had not hesitated to declare 'that the United Provinces would be ready in case of necessity to act in concert with England, not only for the defence of the Netherlands, but also in attacking and harassing France with their naval forces, even by raids and invasions of that country, or in any other way.' He admitted 'that, out of prudence, the possibility of a conflict with the King of France should be considered, and that nothing should be neglected to provide against such an emergency.' When he had reason to fear that the United Provinces might be forced to make war, he did not conceal from D'Estrades that, in spite of their wish to avoid it, they should feel themselves obliged to sustain it, if provoked by Louis XIV. 'I know well,' he says, 'that the worst thing that could happen to the States would be to fall out with France, but this disaster would be inevitable if the King of France should attack the Netherlands after the States had forced Spain to accept the conditions upon which the King had offered peace.'

The defection of Portugal, who had ended by treating with Spain, was of assistance to the United Provinces in rendering Louis more tractable. It deprived him of an ally who had hitherto been useful to him in harassing Spain on her frontier. After the domestic revolution which had deprived Alfonso VI. of his throne and made his brother Dom Pedro regent, the war which had lasted between Spain and Portugal for twenty-six years was suspended, and the court of Madrid had taken the opportunity to make proposals of peace, which had been favourably received at Lisbon.

It was upon Sweden that the guarantee of peace between France and Spain principally depended. But Sweden was very near deceiving the expectations of the States-General. The engagement by which she was associated in the treaty of the Triple Alliance had only been made provisionally by Count Dohna, with a reservation as to the approval of the Swedish Government. The Grand Chancellor attempted to get it rejected. Thinking that an unpardonable advantage had been taken of his absence by his adversaries to give Count Dohna the authority of which he availed himself at

the Hague, Magnus de la Gardie had returned to his seat in the Senate to prevent authority being given to the Swedish ambassador to sanction the treaty by definitely signing it. He brought forward the most urgent reasons for delay, and made known his opinion in writing, intending to use it as a protest. The Senate took no notice and confirmed their orders to Count Dohna to finish what he had begun, without taking any notice of the tardy proposals of the French ambassador. Nevertheless Sweden did not intend to give her co-operation for nothing, and Count Dohna, who had made the participation of his government with the States and England subordinate to the promise of subsidies, imperiously demanded the stipulated payments. 'It is time,' writes De Witt, 'to put the Swedish army on her proper footing if she is to do the service she ought, and it would be deplorable if the money which would put life into this body should not be found in time.' The States accordingly unceasingly demanded this pecuniary assistance from the court of Madrid. They claimed a right to place to her account the expenses of an alliance which would preserve to her what remained of her possessions in the Netherlands. To help her they entered into negotiations with Don Estevan de Gamarra for a treaty, suggested by John de Witt, which would make them the creditors of the Spanish Government. By the terms of this proposal the United Provinces were to receive as security several towns in Upper Guelders in return for a loan of 2,000,000 florins to Spain, two of which were to go to the Swedish subsidies.

Whilst this convention was kept pending by the delays and unwillingness of the Spanish Government, Count Dohna, who had returned to London as ambassador to Charles II., urged the envoys of the republic and the English commissioners to bring to an end the conferences which were needlessly prolonging the negotiations intended to ensure the accomplishment of the Triple Alliance. He told them 'that if he could not obtain satisfaction, Sweden, instead of having a grievance against Spain, would rather have cause to complain of England and the United Provinces.' He declared that if the answer he demanded were not transmitted to him

before the departure of the next courier, the Swedish Government would consider themselves at liberty to take other measures. Mutual concessions helped to bring about an understanding. Overcoming the final delays of the court of Madrid, the negotiators of England and the republic came to an understanding with Count Molina, the Spanish minister in London, to determine the amount of the subsidies, Count Dohna on his side being content, instead of an immediate payment, with an agreement by which the allies pledged themselves to use their utmost efforts to induce Spain to discharge within a given period the subsidies undertaken by her.

The conditions of the agreement thus prepared were soon concluded with the Swedish ambassador, who only survived the success of his diplomacy by a few days. The subsidies promised by Spain amounted to 480,000 crowns. The King of England and the States-General bound themselves to exact payment from Spain within eight days of the ratification of the treaty by the King of Sweden, and the allies declared that in default of such payment they would withdraw all assistance from Spain. Once satisfied by the grant of the subsidies, the Swedish Government definitively confirmed the conditional signature which had been affixed to the treaty by Count Dohna, and the place left vacant for the King of Sweden, as a principal contracting party, was at last filled up. The Triple Alliance which had hitherto been merely contingent was now an established fact, and seemed to be the surest pledge of the preservation of the Netherlands to Spain.

These happy negotiations might not perhaps have sufficed to prevent the King of France from keeping up the war, had they not been supported by military preparations which Louis could not ignore. Spain seemed at last disposed to take measures for defence. Don Juan of Austria had accepted the governorship of the Netherlands, and was to take 10,000 men with him. England, on her part, had not remained idle: Parliament had met in February to vote an estimate of 300,000*l.* to Charles II. for the expenses of equipping a fleet.

The States-General set the example to their allies, and

actively pushed forward their preparations. In spite of the efforts of Gourville, the French envoy, they obtained a contingent of 6,000 men from the Princes of Brunswick-Luneburg. They also accepted the offers of the Duke of Lorraine, who, fearing the intentions of the King of France, undertook, if he were admitted to the Triple Alliance, to bring 6,000 foot and 2,000 horse into the field at the first summons. The States did not depend only upon the assistance of auxiliary troops. They re-organised their own army and determined to add 12,000 men by fresh levies. They wished to assure themselves of an available military force, without the necessity of stripping the fortresses, now occupied by numerous garrisons. They proposed to establish two camps: one on the Scheldt at Bergen-op-Zoom within reach of the Spanish Netherlands; the other on the Yssel at Zutphen for the protection of their frontier. They were prepared to send into the field, as soon as the weather permitted, their whole force of cavalry, 3,700 strong, with 25 regiments of infantry, and asserted that 'they had on foot the most magnificent troops it was possible to see.' They at the same time filled up their principal military appointments, thus putting an end to the long contests which had left them vacant. The command of the army was given to the two major-generals—Prince John Maurice of Nassau, and Wurtz—under whose orders the Prince of Orange was prepared to serve; but the States reserved to themselves the military direction by the powers they gave to seven of their members, representing the seven provinces, who were appointed as their delegates to the camp. The strengthening of their naval forces seemed no less necessary. They fitted out forty-eight men of war, the number of which was eventually to be made up to eighty. 'There is no doubt,' wrote D'Estrades later, 'that had His Majesty not concluded matters by his great discretion, the States would have drawn him into a war, and would have used the enormous sums at their disposal to maintain it.'

The Grand Pensionary would not have shrunk from this extremity, though he did all in his power to prevent it. 'When by obtaining from Spain the satisfaction she ought to give,' he writes to Temple, 'the King of France shall have

been placed under the necessity, either of proceeding to the final conclusion of peace, or of acknowledging his warlike intentions, there will not be the slightest hesitation here in marching to the assistance of the Netherlands, on the very first attempt he makes upon them, if the King of Great Britain will do as much.' Temple constantly encouraged this disposition. 'We cannot follow out a better plan,' he replies to De Witt, 'than that of showing our strength and being prepared for war before it comes; for, as we should draw it upon ourselves by any appearance of wishing for peace, we must on the contrary secure peace by appearing to wish for war.' The Grand Pensionary's policy was identical with that thus marked out by Temple, and whilst taking the necessary measures for intimidating the King of France he was anxious above all to satisfy him. The aim he had before him was the prolongation of the truce, so that peace might become inevitable. 'The States are absolutely of opinion with me,' writes Temple, 'that no treaty can begin with good intentions on the French side unless they consent to a suspension of arms.' Louis would only consent to grant a truce till the end of March, but promised not to take advantage of any fresh conquest he might make, until the 15th of May, if peace could be concluded before that time.

The States did not believe in either the efficacy or the sincerity of this proposal. The restriction of the truce to the end of March seemed to give them too little time to accomplish the work of negotiation, and they demanded that it should be prolonged to the 15th of May. Louis's promise to give up any fresh conquest if peace should be concluded, did not reassure them. 'If all our good offices and offers to make Spain ratify what the Marquis has accepted,' writes Temple to De Witt, 'are not sufficient to withhold them six weeks from what they pretend to restore, how will they be capable of restoring for ever what they have already taken?' 'The States,' boldly declared Van Beuningen to Louis XIV.'s ministers, 'cannot but consider what the King may, rather than what he will, do.'

To obtain from Louis XIV. the concession without which

peace again ran the risk of being called in question, De Witt, recognising the necessity for the greatest circumspection, renewed his counsels of prudence. He was afraid that Van Beuningen's too great vehemence might carry him away, and advised him to neglect no forms of courtesy, but never to yield on the main point. He was careful to make excuses to the French ambassador at the Hague for the impetuosity to which the ambassador for the States had given way, and begged that the King would not heed it. He was so conciliatory, that Lionne writes to D'Estrades: 'Pray tell M. de Witt that if I could spend a couple of hours with him I would answer for the certainty of peace, as I know how reasonable he is, and how fertile in expedients for overcoming all difficulties.'

Anxious to justify this good opinion, the Grand Pensionary resolved to deprive Louis XIV. of his sole pretext against a prolongation of the truce. The King refused to consent, on the plea that it would not help towards peace; and, to justify this allegation, he accused the Spanish Regent of not having given the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, governor of the Netherlands, sufficient powers to render the treaty valid. The Grand Pensionary hastened to cut short this objection, by obtaining orders that the ambassadors of the United Provinces and of England, accredited to the King of France, should make themselves sureties for peace. They entered into an engagement with Louis by the terms of which it was to be forced upon Spain by the allies, if the court of Madrid did not ratify Castel-Rodrigo's acceptance of the King's proposals. 'M. de Witt,' writes D'Estrades, 'has added in the most impressive terms, that if the King, having henceforth in his hands such absolute assurance of peace, refuses to suspend hostilities until the end of May, there will be no one but will believe that it has always been his determination to evade it altogether.'

Louis could no longer plead any justification for his conduct, if he belied himself by retracting his offers. By a last effort he resigned himself to moderation, without relinquishing the ambitious hopes which he contented himself with post-

poning. 'I saw,' he writes in his own memoirs, 'that if I stubbornly determined upon war now, the league which was forming itself to maintain it would eventually remain as a permanent barrier to my legitimate claims, whilst by giving way readily I should destroy it at its birth, and give myself leisure to find work for the allies which would prevent their meddling with whatever time might offer me.'

The three ministers who represented him in the conferences held with the ambassadors of the United Provinces and of England, Lionne, Colbert, and Letellier, were opposed to the continuance of war, thinking that France was not sufficiently prepared for it, either by her alliances, or by the financial resources which were at her disposal. They helped on with goodwill the speedy issue of the negotiations, and, as soon as the guarantee of the acceptance of peace by Spain had been given by the envoys of the States and those of the court of Madrid, they did their best to bring about a final understanding. Lionne drew up, in concert with the two plenipotentiaries of the allies—Van Beuningen and Trevor—the draft of a treaty between France and Spain, by which Louis declared himself irrevocably engaged, provided Spain gave her consent. To guard against any vexatious debates being raised by a new interpretation of the Treaty of the Pyrenees on the subject of the clause of the renunciation of the inheritance of the Spanish monarchy, the King of France was to declare 'that the contracting parties did not propose to acquire any rights, nor would they suffer any prejudice to their respective claims.'

Having thus regulated the conditions of peace, the negotiators agreed on the conditions of the truce. Louis XIV.'s ministers consented to prolong it till the end of May. They only demanded that, 'in the event of peace not being concluded after the expiration of that time, Spain, as a just punishment, should be forced to accept any conditions, however onerous, which the King of France, aided by the allies, might impose by force of arms.' The urgent counsels of John de Witt in favour of a policy of conciliation easily prevailed over the adverse opinion of the commissioners of the States, which he thought improper and superfluous. The satisfaction

demanded by the King of France was accorded to him under the conditions of the agreement made by Louis to keep within the limits of the line of demarcation which should be settled for him in the Netherlands, until the month of August; and, this transaction being happily carried through, the preliminary conventions of peace were signed at St. Germain.

It only remained to convert them into a treaty. At the beginning of the year, Spain and France, at the suggestion of the German Princes, had chosen Aix-la-Chapelle for the assembly of a congress. They now despatched thither their plenipotentiaries. The Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, to whom the Spanish Government had left the direction of the negotiations, had sent from Brussels his delegate, Ferdinand van Broekhoven, Baron of Bergeyck. Louis had given powers to the Marquis Colbert de Croissy, his ambassador at London and brother of the minister Colbert; and Beverningh and Temple were at the same time commissioned by the States and the King of England to represent the mediating powers, to whose intervention peace was due. The negotiators were to meet under the presidency of the Archbishop of Trebizond, nuncio of Pope Clement IX., who had proffered his paternal intervention for the reconciliation of the two Catholic courts. All difficulties seemed to be at an end, the two envoys of France and Spain having received orders 'not to change a word in the project.' 'I hope,' writes Arlington, 'that all may be concluded in an hour's time, as there is nothing more to haggle about.' 'It is to you,' writes De Witt to Temple, 'that we chiefly owe the present goodwill of the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, and the enjoyment of the great advantages which ensue for Christendom. I speak of it as a thing we already possess, as I see nothing which could now deprive us of it.'

Nevertheless, the conclusion of the negotiations was again endangered by unexpected obstacles. 'The intelligence we receive from Brussels is enough to turn one's head,' writes De Witt to Temple, in much anxiety. The injurious proceedings of Louis XIV. had, in fact, encouraged the Spanish Government to start fresh objections for the purpose of

delaying the conclusion of peace. Whilst the negotiations were proceeding, the King of France was committing depredations of all kinds in the Netherlands, to the amount of more than five hundred thousand francs. He, moreover, destroyed all the fortifications in Franche-Comté: 'so as to return that province to Spain in such a condition that he could at any moment again render himself master of it,' as he himself declares in his memoirs. By his own admission, therefore, the reproaches of the allies were justified. The English minister Arlington, speaking very strongly of his conduct, writes thus: 'We live in very extraordinary times, when even the appearance of morality is ridiculed.' The Spanish Government, on its side, showed a great want of straightforwardness in the execution of the engagements entered into for the signing of the treaty, and Baron de Bergeyck, the envoy from the Netherlands, put the negotiators out of all patience by his captious criticisms. Some violent scenes ensued, in which Beverningh, the plenipotentiary of the States, nearly drew his sword upon him in the presence of Temple. Baron de Bergeyck at first pretended that he had not the necessary authority to pledge the court of Madrid. Forced to acknowledge that he had received it, he tried other evasions and took up a point of etiquette, by disputing the precedence in signing which the Marquis de Croissy had reserved to himself. Disconcerted by the readiness with which the French ambassador left him at liberty to sign two other copies as he pleased, he found himself at the end of his expedients for delay, and consented at length to the conclusion of the long-deferred treaty of peace.

Scarcely had he signed before he had recourse to a final ruse, to procure the Spanish Government a means of contesting its validity. He took upon himself the title of ambassador, having hitherto only been known as a delegate from the governor of the Netherlands, leaving to the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo the title of plenipotentiary for the court of Madrid. This trick was foiled, and the court of France, mistrusting the subterfuges of the Spanish Government, imperatively insisted that the most precise formalities should be observed in the ratification. Peace was proclaimed simultaneously at Paris

and Brussels on May 29, seventeen days after the signing of the treaty at Aix-la-Chapelle.

This peace, which saved Spain in spite of herself, was very advantageous to France. It insured important acquisitions to Louis XIV., which extended the frontiers of his kingdom, and commenced the dismemberment of the Netherlands. It at the same time gave Europe an apparent pledge of moderation on his part, which he profited by to boast 'that it was solely his desire for peace which had disarmed him.' It was none the less the Triple Alliance which had obliged him to stop short in his conquests. Threatened by a European coalition, he had shown a wise policy in ceasing to defy it.

Convinced that the neighbourhood of France was incompatible with the security of the republic, the States-General had been forced to oppose it. The invasion of the Netherlands by Louis XIV., in defiance of the promises he had made to them of a preliminary agreement, had driven them to the absolute necessity of finding an alliance to replace that which had existed for over half a century between France and the United Provinces. But they could only partially trust their new allies. They did not want to be too closely bound to Spain, not expecting much assistance from her, and if they lent her their aid, it was not to preserve the integrity of the Spanish monarchy, but that their own independence might not be compromised. England appeared a doubtful ally. She had always, under Charles II. as under Cromwell, been the rival of the republic, with whom she had been reconciled, within the last year only, by the Peace of Breda. Her late humiliations would probably make her angry feelings both violent and lasting, and the Grand Pensionary had only been induced to appeal to her after many misgivings, to prevent Louis from completing the conquest of the Netherlands.

De Witt did not shut his eyes to the formidable dangers of a rupture with France, and had set himself to avert them. He would only in the last extremity have entered upon a war 'by which Spain alone would have profited, whilst the States-General would have had to bear the risks and expenses.' He

sought in the Triple Alliance a guarantee for the peace mutually agreed upon by the two belligerent powers, and, taking upon himself the part of mediator, was proud of filling it, while scrupulously adhering to his policy.

At one time he stated that 'if France refused to sign the treaty he would not hesitate to give without stint the most thorough support to Spain, in whose favour the States would act by land and sea;' at another time he declared that 'if the obstacles to peace came from the Spanish Government he would only seek the surest means of reducing them to reason, and, if necessary, would come to an understanding with the King of France.' He thus moderated the pretensions of Louis XIV., obtained the necessary concessions from the Spanish Government, and insured the acceptance of conditions of peace which seemed sufficient for the security of the United Provinces.

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, by bringing to a favourable termination these laborious negotiations, enabled the States-General to reap the benefit of the Triple Alliance, and completed for them the glory of the Peace of Breda which had been forced upon England. They might now consider themselves as the arbiters of Europe, and they congratulated themselves with somewhat rash pride on a diplomatic victory which was in a few years' time to cost them so dear. The medal struck on the occasion of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle still testifies to the high opinion which the republic had of herself and wished to give to others. In it she is represented in the figure of a woman leaning against a trophy, holding a pike surmounted by a helmet, and followed at a distance by several vessels, the double symbol of her liberty and her power. The inscription engraved in Latin on the reverse is thus worded: 'Having reconciled Kings, re-established liberty on the sea, brought peace upon the earth by force of arms, and pacified Europe, the States of the United Provinces have caused this medal to be struck, 1668.' They boasted only of what they had done, and had every right to congratulate themselves on the glorious success of that foreign policy for which they were indebted to their great minister.

CHAPTER VIII.

INTERNAL PACIFICATION—THE PERPETUAL EDICT.

The Orange party without a leader—Death of Prince William Frederick of Nassau—Rivalry between Zealand and Holland—Revival of the Orange party in Holland—Resignation of Beverningh as treasurer-general—Manifestations in favour of the Prince of Orange—Resistance of the Grand Pensionary—His attempt at conciliation—The States of Holland undertake the education of the young Prince—De Witt assumes the direction of it—Advantageous position in which the young Prince is placed—The King of France restores to him the principality of Orange—Project of agreement for his entering the Council of State, and for the separation of the civil and military offices—The Grand Pensionary's plan changed by the proposed abolition of the Stadtholdership—The Perpetual Edict voted by the States of Holland and sworn to by the town councils—Irritation of the other provinces—Attempt at a coalition against Holland—Project of Harmony prepared by De Witt—The provinces of Guelders and Overijssel give in their adhesion to it—Negotiations with the provinces of Friesland, Groningen, and Zealand to obtain their consent—Apparent good terms between the Prince of Orange and De Witt—Success of the home and foreign policy of the Grand Pensionary—His happiness in private life—His correspondence with his wife during his mission to the fleet—His children, his fortune, his home—Death of his wife—His sorrow—Letters of condolence—His fourth re-election as Grand Pensionary—The services which he rendered—The remuneration which he received—His virtues and his merits as a statesman—His portraits.

INTERNAL troubles had not been wanting to the governing party and to its illustrious head, the Grand Pensionary of Holland. Whilst the republic had been plunged into the dangers of a war with England, the Orange party had been making fresh efforts to gain the mastery, but the far-seeing and energetic policy of John de Witt had shut the door against them. As long as hostilities lasted he had succeeded in making any attempt at restoration in favour of the King of England's nephew appear dangerous to the safety of the State. But when Charles II.'s support became necessary to the republic to restrain Louis XVI.'s

ambition, the Grand Pensionary, driven to have recourse to an English alliance, took measures in time to prevent its forcing upon them a change of government, to the benefit of the Prince of Orange.

The weakening of the Orange party, now without a leader, proved most opportune for him. Of the two Princes of the late Stadtholder's family who might have acted as guardians to William II.'s young son, one, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, lieutenant-general in command of the cavalry, had held himself aloof, and sought to play no part in politics, in order that he might win the favour of the republican party; the other, Prince William Frederick, grand master of the artillery, had made friends with John de Witt, but with all his efforts had not been able to obtain the rank of major-general. Moreover, he had died shortly before from an accident. Being in command of an expedition in favour of the Prince of East Friesland against the Bishop of Münster, whilst besieging the town of Dykerschans, he mortally wounded himself with a pistol he was trying. The partisans of the Prince of Orange, who had not despaired of finding in him a defender of their interests, could not conceal how dismayed and disheartened they were at losing him. 'The weight of such a misfortune has quite stunned us,' wrote one of them. His widow Albertina Agnes, daughter of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry and the Princess-Dowager, became guardian of his son, Henry Casimir, aged seven years, who succeeded to his father's office as Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, but without the power of exercising his functions. His minority reduced the two provinces, now deprived of their head, to powerlessness. The Princess of Nassau, following her husband's example, seemed inclined to disown, rather than to support, the opposition to the new government. 'She does not approve,' writes Count d'Estrades, 'of the sentiments in which her nephew is being brought up, of seeking no other protection than that of the King of England; and as his education is so opposed to what she considers proper, she takes no further interest in his affairs.'

Zealand alone had any power to trouble the republican

party in its victory, in consequence of the appointment of the new councillor pensionary whom it had selected, Peter de Huybert. The death of Adrian Veth had left vacant the post of minister for the States of that Province. John de Witt had vainly sought it for one of his political friends. His confidential agents—the advocate Seroskerk and his relation Daniel Fannius, fiscal of the Admiralty of Zeeland, who kept up an active correspondence with him to account for the use of the secret funds with the disposal of which he was entrusted—took infinite trouble, but to no purpose. They only succeeded in delaying the election, and four months after the death of Veth, Peter de Huybert replaced him.

A member of one of the principal families in Zeeland, Peter de Huybert, who at twenty-four had entered the council of Middleburg, had distinguished himself by the part which he took in the negotiations during the Northern war. Sent successively to the Elector of Brandenburg and to the King of Sweden, he had prepared himself for a leading position by filling the post of secretary to the States of the Province. He won their confidence by remaining faithful to the cause of the House of Orange, 'whose devoted servant,' according to the testimony of a contemporary, 'he was.' His talents, his energy, his experience in public affairs, the power given to him by his office, and by that of his cousin, Justus de Huybert, who succeeded him as secretary to the States of Zeeland, pointed to him as a possible rival of the Grand Pensionary of Holland.

To wean him from the Orange party, De Witt encouraged his mistrust of the deputies of Vere and Flushing, who, holding their position at the option of the Prince of Orange, the Lord Paramount of the two towns, aspired to the leadership of the States of the Province. The Councillor Pensionary of Zeeland, anxious to maintain the prerogatives of his office, and supported by the members of the other towns, disputed the privileges arrogated to themselves by the deputies of Vere and Flushing, and claimed for the States of the Province, whose prime minister he was, the free exercise of their sovereignty. The marriage of his nephew Regensberck with the daughter of Thibault, the head of the

Republican party in Zeeland, skilfully promoted by John de Witt from political motives, was a still surer pledge of a mutual understanding, and gave the Grand Pensionary of Holland hopes that he would find in Huybert an ally instead of a rival.

But it was not only against Zeeland that the States of Holland had to take precautions.

To remain masters of the government of the confederation, they had still another danger to avert, that of the internal dissensions in their province. The unhappy beginning of the war with England had caused these to revive, and the re-establishment of the Prince of Orange in his father's functions had again become the war-cry of the malcontents. At Rotterdam the magistrates were threatened by a rising of the populace even in the town hall.

At Leyden the crier who proclaimed a levy on behalf of the States was thrown into the water. The mob loudly clamoured that the levy should be made in the name of the Prince of Orange, and the burgomaster who presided at the enlistment thought it necessary to satisfy their demands. At the ports the sailors showed the same feeling, and it was shared by their officers. Admiral Obdam, although loaded with favours by the States of Holland, had none the less, it was said, secretly promised the Prince of Orange to declare himself on his side if he was victorious, but Obdam having perished in the first battle fought against the English fleet, Tromp, who hoped to succeed him, assured the Prince of Orange that victory could not be hoped for on the sea unless the force was placed under his orders.

The assembling in the following year of an army corps of 12,000 men, which was to be employed in the defence of the Republic against the Bishop of Münster, nearly paved the way for the success of a military conspiracy. The two commissioners whom the provinces of Guelders and Overysse had appointed to superintend the expedition, had promised to present the young Prince to the troops. De Witt, warned in time, postponed his departure.

The Calvinist clergy, on their side, indulged in seditious

preachings. They took advantage of the prayers which had been appointed to be said to plead the necessity for a speedy restoration. The States were obliged to threaten with their displeasure those ministers who treated of public affairs in the pulpit and made themselves the accusers of the government. One of them, Thaddæus Landmann, who had taken for his text these words from the prophet Hosea: 'I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now,' was suspended from his ministry until he had humbly apologised. The most fiery of the ministers at the Hague, Simon Simonides, having preached against ingratitude, and having imputed the public misfortunes to forgetfulness of the benefits which Holland owed to the House of Orange, thought fit to lay the blame on De Witt, and made the most offensive allusions to him. The town magistrate ordered him to apologise personally to the Grand Pensionary. The latter received him with his customary politeness and kept him to dinner, only requesting him gently to be more careful in the observance of his duties as a clergyman; but he did not succeed in disarming his implacable resentment.

The most faithful of John de Witt's friends were discouraged. In spite of his urgent entreaties, Beverningh, in whom he had placed the utmost confidence, suddenly failed him, retired to his country house, and resigned his office of treasurer-general to the United Provinces. 'Having no children to leave anything to, he would not,' he said, 'kill himself with business,' and gave this as his reason for retiring. Alarmed at the danger to the republic of the war with England, and foreseeing an approaching change of government, he did not conceal from Count d'Estrades 'that his reason for not remaining in office was that matters were getting too complicated.' The magistrates and deputies of Amsterdam themselves, who had hitherto been the leaders of the republican party, showed some hesitation; 'which,' sorrowfully writes De Witt to Van Beuningen, 'has set the example of want of courage to some others, who, as you know, had not too much to lose.'

The absence of the Grand Pensionary, who had so cou-

rageously embarked with the fleet, had deprived the States of Holland of their usual defender.

His most faithful friend, Nicholas Vivien, who in his capacity of Pensionary of Dordrecht was commissioned to replace him, wrote to him that if he did not speedily return his cause would be lost. His father, Jacob de Witt, alarmed at the dangers to which his departure exposed the government of the republic, speaks to him of his uneasiness in the private letter which he writes to him: 'Very dear son, I do not know what else to write to you, but that I fancy I see from afar that the cows are in the clover. The old woman' (it was thus he spoke of the Princess-Dowager) 'has stopped the advance of the Luneburg troops, by means of her son-in-law, the Elector of Brandenburg. Overijssel and Zeeland are taking hostile measures against us. Amsterdam and some other towns are beginning to totter. Your brother is at Groningen, and I hear nothing of his coming. I imagine they will try their utmost to prevent your return here. Come, in order to see to all this, and to insure success.'

It was against the Grand Pensionary that all blows were levelled, in the hopes of thus precipitating a change of the republican government, which did not seem likely to survive his fall. One of his most constant correspondents, Colonel Bampffield, gave him notice almost daily of the incessantly renewed attacks of his enemies. 'In the towns and public places,' writes D'Estrades, 'they spoke of him as a traitor.' Such licence was given to hatred and calumny, that the incorruptible guardian of his country's liberty was exhibited in the light of a public enemy. This was but a prelude to the attempts to which, seven years later, John de Witt was to become a victim.

The manifestations made on all sides in favour of the Prince of Orange, seemed to denote an approaching restoration. At Rotterdam over 4,000 of the inhabitants went out to meet and greet him on his arrival, and the magistrates were nearly going out in a body to receive him with the honours that belonged of right to the former Stadtholders. Ruyter, whose fidelity to the States was above suspicion,

eagerly welcomed the young Prince on his visit to the fleet, under the escort and superintendence of the Grand Pensionary, and thanked him for the encouragement which his presence gave the crews, telling him that it had enabled him to enlist more than 1,000 men. The festivities given by the corporation at the Hague, in the quarter where the Prince resided, gave the townspeople an opportunity of showing the attachment they felt towards him. He had come, in company with John de Witt, to take part in the rejoicings, and after having assisted at a banquet which was protracted for three days, and to which he himself contributed some of the dishes served, he was unanimously elected president of the association. He held an actual court, although without the exercise of any authority. 'Every day,' writes the French ambassador, 'numbers of persons, amongst others the officers in garrison at the Hague, dine with him and escort him when he goes out driving.' He resumed his part of pretender, and it did not seem that he would have long to wait for the inheritance of his ancestors.

Although he was only sixteen years of age, his partisans were anxious to obtain for him the office of captain-general, or at least that of general of the cavalry, which post was also vacant. They demanded also his admittance to the Council of State, which would give him the opportunity of acquiring some knowledge of military matters.

The people of Zealand, who, according to a contemporary, had remained not only ardent, but rabid, in his cause, made it a point of honour to obtain this satisfaction for him, and with this view the States of the Province, returning to an offensive policy, sent a deputation of twenty-eight members to the Hague, who were to threaten a dissolution of the union if the Prince's preferment was refused.

'If we put his foot in the stirrup for him,' they said, 'we shall soon manage to get him into the saddle.'

The Grand Pensionary had not allowed himself to be surprised or depressed. On his return from the fleet he soon restored the assembly of Holland to its usual harmony, and made good use of the proceedings of the French ambassador, who,

to gain the confidence of the States and win them back to the French Alliance, was exerting himself in the town council in favour of the election of magistrates who were opposed to a change of government. Count d'Estrades feared that any appointments made in the interests of the Prince of Orange might serve to reconcile the United Provinces to England; and he undertook, for the purpose of opposing them, a tour of the provinces, of which he perhaps exaggerated the success with too much complacency. 'I invited all the deputies of Holland, nearly four hundred in number, to dinner, one after the other,' he writes, 'M. de Witt does the same, and we act in concert to win back those who are wavering.'

Their energetic co-operation gave the victory to the policy of the Grand Pensionary. In spite of the opposition of three of the provinces, he managed to get his own candidate, Conrad Burg, who had represented the republic in Russia, and was a sheriff in the municipal council of Amsterdam, appointed to succeed Beverningh as treasurer-general of the United Provinces. On the other hand, he persuaded the States to set aside the claim of the Elector of Brandenburg, who appeared to be putting a price upon his alliance by demanding beforehand satisfaction for his nephew. 'The deputies of Holland,' he writes, 'have represented to the States-General that it was not seemly that a foreign prince should publicly interfere in a purely domestic affair, in which all the other provinces concur, so that the president has been requested to remonstrate with the ministers of Brandenburg, who have withdrawn the memorial.' According to Count d'Estrades, the Grand Pensionary remained master of the conduct of the government.

Still, the resistance was insufficient to avert the danger which was constantly threatening. The fresh campaign entered upon by the States of Zealand in favour of the Prince of Orange might prove the signal for internal dissensions, aggravated by a foreign war. A compromise would be needed to disarm the Orange party, and De Witt recognised the necessity for this. 'The intrigues carried on here,' he writes, 'will certainly place Holland in a disastrous predicament if

they are not forestalled by some compromise.' He preferred, therefore, to allow with a good grace what he could not prevent.

With this idea he had already made an overture of conciliation calculated at the same time to strengthen the alliance with France. He had proposed the appointment of the Prince of Orange to the command of the cavalry, on the condition that Marshal Turenne should be made commander-in-chief. 'The councillor deputies,' he writes, 'are of opinion that it is necessary to find a brave and skilful general belonging to the Reformed religion, of a rank sufficient to place him above the other generals who are in the service of the State, without giving them cause for offence; and whose interests are such that the chief allies of the republic can place confidence in him. If one could know M. de Turenne's wishes it would be easy to turn the scale in his favour.'

Turenne was worthy of this preference. His military fame and his religious faith were not his only titles to the selection of the States-General. He had passed his apprenticeship in arms, under the command of the Stadtholders Maurice and Frederick Henry, in the war with Spain, and as a grandson by his mother's side of William I. his kinship was a further reason for confiding in him.

Nevertheless, the Grand Pensionary's measures were not as successful as he had expected. He could not bring the King of France round to his views, as Louis feared that so much military power in the hands of the Prince of Orange, even under the command of Turenne, would give him too great influence with the army and allow him to put it at the disposal of the King of England. De Witt was therefore obliged to abandon his project, although without giving up a hope of attaining by some other means the end he had in view.

The deliberations of the States of Holland on the proposal which had been made to them by the States of Zealand, to throw open the road to power to the young Prince of Orange, suggested to him a new line of conduct. The nobles and deputies of six of the towns had declared that if the education of William II.'s son was confided to the States of Holland by

his grandmother, the Princess-Dowager, the deputies of Holland ought to accept the proposal. The Grand Pensionary had tried to get this arranged immediately after the King of England's restoration, but Charles II.'s ill-will foiled him. It was nevertheless a project worthy of a great statesman, and De Witt returned to it with confidence. He looked upon it as destined to end the evil era of civil discord. He liked to imagine that an aspirant brought up under the care and patronage of the guardians of the constitution would be content with being the chief citizen of a republic, and thought it the best means that could be taken to insure him against any ambition of becoming its master.

There was no longer any fear that the King of England would try and dispute his nephew's education with him, by imposing his guardianship on the States; the war in which Charles II. was engaged with the United Provinces deterred him from this. The Grand Pensionary was moreover guaranteed against his hostility by the protection of the King of France, and to secure it affected to have no wish but that of following Count d'Estrades' advice, being skilful enough to seem to yield to the course he was himself disposed to follow. He had thus only the opposition of the Orange party to overcome, which, carried away by the fervour of its hopes, wished to keep all and give nothing.

To overcome this difficulty De Witt sought the concurrence of the Princess-Dowager, who was impatient to come forward and did not bear inaction with equanimity. She was the more anxious to come to terms with the Grand Pensionary that she knew how important it was to the Prince of Orange to obtain the assistance he needed to open to him the road to power on his quitting private life. Independently of the vanity which influenced her, she had sufficient perception to have shown herself favourable to an understanding with the leaders of the republican party had they consented to burden themselves with the interests of the House of Orange, which the Orange party was powerless to advance. De Witt eagerly profited by this unexpected alliance. At his request the French ambassador, with whom he was desirous to act in

concert to insure the success of his projects, made the first overtures to the Princess-Dowager, which she received with suspicion. He did not hesitate then to go to her himself, and easily convinced her of his sincerity. He undertook to make the States of Holland the guardians of the young Prince if she would consent to ask them for their protection in favour of her grandson.

Such an offer was too tempting to be refused. According to a contemporary (the Count de Guiche) the Princess-Dowager was dazzled, and followed the example of those in whom long abstinence has so awakened appetite that, instead of giving themselves time to make a good meal, they satiate themselves with the first food that comes in their way.

Following the advice of John de Witt, she sent the deputies of Holland a memorial that had been suggested to her by the Grand Pensionary, in which she asked them to undertake the education of the young Prince of Orange. She had made up her mind, as the Grand Pensionary had given her reason to hope, that the States of Holland, after having taken her grandson under their protection, would give him the pension of 100,000 francs which had been promised to him, and would not long defer his admittance into the Council of State. The deputies, who were prepared for this demand, consented without hesitation, on the recommendation of John de Witt, and the more readily that they could thus set aside the importunate demands of the States of Zealand and enjoy, so to speak, their confusion.

Two days later they elected the members of the commission for the education of the young Prince, giving them full powers. They re-elected those who had formed part of the commission which six years before had already been formed for the guardianship of William II.'s son, according to the agreement which De Witt had entered into with his mother, and which had not survived the death of that princess.

Noortwijk, one of the deputies of the nobility, who was devoted to the States Government, and Nanning Forest, auditor of the domain accounts, returned to their original functions.

The two other commissioners, Beveren de Barendrecht and Cornelius Graeff de Zuydpolsbroek, were dead, and it was necessary to replace them. In spite of the opposition of the deputies of Leyden and Haarlem the States appointed as their successors Adrien de Blyenbourg, lord of Naldwijck, a member of the Council of Dordrecht, and Dalkenier, burgomaster of Amsterdam. The chief authority rested, however, with the Grand Pensionary; and the First Minister of a republic thus found himself charged with a prince's education.

De Witt had many obstacles to overcome in order to conform it to his views and hopes. The son of William II. was sixteen and had to be taken into account. 'My master is no longer a child, thank God,' wrote Huyghens de Zuylichem, the private secretary of the late Stadtholder, to Lionne; 'I see with astonishment how he has grown in these few years, and thriven in mind and body.' Accustomed to look upon the States of Holland as usurpers, the Prince of Orange had opposed the overtures made to them by his grandmother, and in spite of the representations of the Count de Guiche, who had some influence with him, he had refused to take any part in the request she had made to them.

It was important that his ill-will should not be encouraged by those who surrounded him. Not satisfied with deterring him from a reconciliation with the republican party, his advisers spared no pains to confound his interests with those of the King of England, his uncle, and thus seemed to render themselves accomplices in the war declared by Charles II. against the republic of the United Provinces. De Witt, therefore, took the most energetic measures to withdraw the young Prince from his surroundings. 'There will be no promotion for the Prince of Orange,' he writes, 'with the consent of the States, until he shall have been detached from those who are, with reason, called the partisans of England, and who are conspiring to give King Charles II. the sovereignty of Holland, in the name of his sister's son.' These imputations were justified. The young Prince's court was that of an English prince. His two gentlemen, Bromley, and Heenvliet, a son of the Princess Royal's former confidential agent, were both

Englishmen. His steward or master of the household, Boreel, the son of the ambassador of the United Provinces in France, had become a naturalised subject of Great Britain. His governor was his natural uncle, Frederick of Nassau Zulestein, whose wife, an Englishwoman, had the upper hand of her husband, and acquired great authority over the young Prince. Zulestein was in such close communication with the English court that, at the commencement of the war, the Duke of York wrote to him announcing the arrival of the enemy's fleet on the shores of Holland, and the Grand Pensionary had reason therefore to mistrust the confidence placed in him by the Prince of Orange. To get him out of the way he induced the States of Holland to appoint a new governor for their ward. The Princess-Dowager, having always been inimical to Zulestein, who had been acknowledged by her husband the Stadtholder Frederick Henry as his natural son, hastened to express her approval of this change. But the Prince of Orange, who looked upon this separation as a great sacrifice, shrank from no efforts to retain his governor. He went to the French ambassador and begged him, with tears in his eyes, to use his influence with the Grand Pensionary to spare him so great a sorrow, promising to look upon M. de Witt as a father and to conduct himself as a true child of the State, if only his request was acceded to. He was so ill with grief that he would not leave his room or even his bed. It was in vain that he added threats to entreaties, declaring 'that it was a mistake to continue to treat him as a child, that he was no longer one, and that he would soon let them know it.' De Witt remained inflexible. Zulestein obtained, it is true, as compensation, a continuance of his salary of 4,000 florins for five years, but he was none the less removed from his pupil.

The States of Holland chose as his successor John van Ghent, deputy for Guelders in the States-General, who had always favoured the existing government, and had been one of the extraordinary embassy sent to France some years previously, to conclude the last treaty of alliance.

The appointment of the new governor was specially calculated to please Louis XIV. by reassuring him as to any fear

of a union of the Orange party with England. To lay Van Ghent under an obligation to him the King of France commissioned his ambassador to offer him secretly an annuity of 4,000 francs.

The Prince of Orange made a last attempt to prevent the States from forcing their choice upon him. He begged Van Ghent to refuse the post offered to him, promising to take into account his refusal, and to see to his future welfare and to that of his children. But Van Ghent, not wishing to break with the States, preferred to brave a displeasure from which he had nothing to fear for the moment, and did not hesitate to take possession of his office.

The Prince of Orange had only to submit. He resigned himself in silence to the affront which had been put upon him, and hid his grief until the time came when he could obtain reparation. He only showed his resentment to his grandmother, whom he could not forgive for having, even in his own interests, made common cause with the enemies of the House of Orange. Wishing to revenge himself upon her for her behaviour, he urged his new guardians to settle his accounts, which were in great confusion, for which he declared the Princess-Dowager was responsible; 'complaining that his land was always being sold under its value, that none of his debts were paid, and that accounts were owing to his tradespeople of years' standing.' At the same time assuming a reserve and habit of dissimulation beyond his years, he recognised the necessity of satisfying the States of Holland by an appearance of submissiveness until he should be emancipated. He had apparently no other thought than that of gaining their approval, and affected so much warmth towards them that his grandmother took offence. He answered her reproaches with firmness, representing to her 'that she had only herself to thank if he looked upon them as those upon whom his future depended.' 'I left him,' writes the French ambassador, 'ready to do anything which M. de Witt might advise.'

De Witt fulfilled the duties which his new office imposed upon him towards the Prince with exemplary fidelity. The attachment and solicitude he showed towards him are testified

to by all contemporary writers. To win his confidence he even took part in his games. Count d'Estrades relates that 'he was challenged to a game of tennis by the Grand Pensionary and the Prince of Orange, whom he had gone to see at play together.' 'I took them at their word,' he adds, 'and without taking off my coat played six games, which I won.' John de Witt's vigilant care over the education confided to him was never at fault. The Princess-Dowager having asked that her grandson might be present at a marriage in the family, he answered: 'The committee of education refer this decision to your Highness, only begging you not to allow the Prince's absence to be prolonged to the prejudice of the useful employment of his time.' He had himself undertaken the direction of his studies, with the assistance of the young Prince's tutor, Bornius. He regularly examined him on the work of the week, and further reserved at least an hour every Monday for instructing him in politics.

He, no doubt, counted upon these lessons to teach him, if not to love the States, at any rate to respect their authority, and to encourage him to follow the example of his ancestor, William I., rather than that of his father. A room in the prince's palace, called the *chamber of education*, was used for these conversations, by which, through a strange reverse of fortune, the son of the Stadtholder William II.'s prisoner prepared the last descendant of the House of Orange to make himself worthy of the power of his ancestors. 'I am anxious to make the Prince of Orange's education a complete work,' says the Grand Pensionary with a patriotic disinterestedness which does him honour; 'my party may fall, and it is necessary that this young man should some day be qualified to govern the republic.'

By taking the Prince of Orange under their protection, the States of Holland gave him the opportunity of justifying in the future the foresight of John de Witt. When they resolved to undertake the charge of his education, one of the principal members of the States-General said, laughingly: 'Holland thinks it can make the Prince a child of the State, but I think she will be rather the Prince's child.' The partisans of

William II.'s son had, moreover, never ceased to count on time as their best ally, in re-establishing his fortunes. 'When his Highness shall be a few years older,' they wrote, 'the provinces will pull down all this scaffolding. The time will come. The work is begun, and will go on of itself without troubling anyone. The Prince, once of age, will undo all that has been done during his minority.'

He had no need to wait for his majority to profit by the events which conspired in his favour. The restitution of the Principality of Orange, which the King of France had taken possession of some years previously, had already restored his credit abroad. Louis XIV. had for a long time refused to give it up, in spite of the urgent entreaties and supplications of Huyghens de Zuylichem, whom the Princess-Dowager had sent to Paris to support her claims. He eventually gave way, to please the Elector of Brandenburg, the Princess's son-in-law, whose neutrality he was interested in securing for the execution of his plans on the Spanish Netherlands. Moreover, the peace which had just been concluded with the King of England at Breda, seemed to impose upon the States of Holland the necessity of concessions in favour of Charles II. with a view to conciliating the republic's new ally. Finally Louis's invasion of the Spanish Netherlands, by placing the States-General in jeopardy of a war with France, made it impossible for them to leave any of their military commands vacant, thus favouring the impatience of those who wished to reserve to the descendant of the former stadtholders the supreme command of the army and navy, which had belonged to his ancestors.

De Witt had been long prepared for this event, which he considered inevitable. 'The magistrates and the people are so determined in favour of the young Prince,' he had written six years previously, 'that as soon as he has reached a suitable age, the command of the troops will fall into his hands.' But on the other hand, being enlightened by the events of 1650, and the recollection of William II.'s coup d'état, he was convinced that in allowing the powers of the Stadtholder to be united to those of captain- and admiral-general, 'he should

make the Prince of Orange no longer the officer, but the sovereign of the State.' To separate the two offices and make them incompatible with one another was the programme proposed by De Witt, to insure the duration of the republican government. He flattered himself that he could soon put it into execution, by arranging for the admission of the young Prince into the Council of State and his appointment as captain- and admiral-general, in consideration of his renunciation of the stadtholdership. 'We ought,' he wrote to one of his confidants, 'on the one hand firmly to secure public liberty, and on the other to grant to the Prince of Orange at once a position suitable to his age, which does not at present allow of his being raised to any higher rank.' By following this line of conduct, De Witt sought not merely a momentary expedient, but a solution of the difficulty which might insure security in the future.

The proposal he had in view, and to which the negotiations with the Prince of Orange were a prelude, had been considered in the first place by the councillor deputies, and submitted in their name to the States of Holland. By it they were asked to come to an agreement with the other provinces for the disposal of the higher posts in the army, leaving open that of captain-general, which seemed thus to be reserved for the Prince of Orange. To prove their intentions in regard to this, they were asked to guarantee his admission into the Council of State, and his appointment as commissioner to the army of the States in the event of war, that he might thus be prepared for the exercise of military authority. But they were only to be called upon to fulfil this engagement after obtaining a preliminary guarantee from the States-General that whoever should be stadtholder—that is, governor—of one of the provinces of the confederation, should be considered ineligible for the post of captain- and admiral-general.

These resolutions were sent for deliberation to the town councils, and communicated to the States-General. They did not seem likely to give rise to any serious debate. It was rather the interest of the Orange party to be content with the offers of the States of Holland. It was not suffi-

ciently united to be exacting. Besides, the States of Zealand had never forgiven the Princess-Dowager for having forsaken them. They accused her of deceiving them, by becoming reconciled without their knowledge to the new holders of power, and of showing preference to the States of Holland. They declared that, having been thus set aside, they gave up any further steps on behalf of the young Prince, and accordingly, having in vain tried to obtain some part in the direction of his education, they now held themselves aloof. In short, the most devoted of the Prince of Orange's partisans attached themselves without scruple to the new government. Count Sommeldsdyck, one of the principal nobles of Holland, whose father had been employed by the late Stadtholder in carrying out his coup d'état, wrote to De Witt: 'I hope to obtain the honour of your friendship, and I desire still more to give you the assurance of mine, in all constancy and fidelity, in the interest of the established government, which I promise you now and always to consider before my own. If my late father acted otherwise, no doubt he had his reasons as I now have mine; and so the world goes round.' De Witt had, therefore, good cause to express his satisfaction to one of his confidants in these terms: 'The power and influence of Holland are so much greater than those of the other provinces, that in regard to them their Noble and Great Mightinesses can, with good management, accomplish anything on which they may determine with good reason and upon a sound basis.'

The States of Holland, moreover, were careful not to abuse their advantage. They contented themselves with suggesting an agreement, by proposing the separation of the two offices of stadtholder and captain-general, and made no pretension to dispense with the co-operation of the other provinces. But, with some of their deputies, feeling took the place of prudence and gave the upper hand to an aggressive policy, which soon set the two parties at variance. Whilst De Witt inclined to moderation and patience, two of the deputies for Amsterdam, Fagel and Valkenier, went far beyond the initiative of the Grand Pensionary. In the impulsive ardour of their ambition, they desired to stand foremost amongst the most

violent enemies of the House of Orange, of which they were to become, a few years later, the fiercest partisans. The Grand Pensionary stood out in vain for two days against the proposal which they laid before him, and ended by giving a reluctant consent.

A fresh resolution adopted by the States of Holland led them into a path at the entrance of which they had hitherto paused. They declared at first that they would not consent to the appointment of a captain- and admiral-general until the States-General had made such an office incompatible with that of stadtholder. This declaration not seeming to them sufficient, they also decided to abolish the stadtholdership in their province and to put it out of their power to restore it. In consequence of this suppression the powers which had hitherto belonged to the stadtholders, and which had remained in abeyance, were definitively redistributed between the States, the nobles, and the magistrates of the towns. By a subsequent regulation, the States and the nobles settled of what offices each should have the disposal. The States also brought under their own jurisdiction all differences in the towns, either between themselves or with the courts of law. The magistrates of the towns, on their side, claimed the appointment of all the members of their councils as well as the choice of their burgomasters and sheriffs. As a guarantee of the stability of this constitution of the republican government, an oath was imposed upon the Grand Pensionary, upon the members of the Assembly, and upon all who formed or might hereafter form part of the body of nobles or of the magistrates. The formula was thus conceived: 'I promise and declare that I will faithfully uphold the above-mentioned edict in all its clauses and articles, and that I will never permit it to be violated or derogated from. Moreover, I will not only never make any proposal which shall be opposed to it, but I will never offer any advice tending to prevent its accomplishment, or to bring its validity into question. So help me God Almighty!'

No opposition was offered by the Assembly of the Province. The Grand Pensionary had long before insured himself the

co-operation of the nobility, by granting to those amongst them who represented their order in the States, hereditary privileges, not only for their sons, but in default of sons for their next brother. The deputies of the towns on their side could not but agree with the opinion of the magistrates in favour of the definite abolition of the stadtholdership, which assured them for ever the free election of their municipal magistrates. The promise, moreover, of giving military power to the Prince of Orange seemed a sufficient satisfaction to his partisans. Some members made a few objections in regard merely to the oath. A few of the deputies of the nobles having asked for an adjournment before committing themselves irrevocably, the States resolved that the oath should not be required until the following session.

Four months later, when they met for the new session, the difficulties that had been raised were got over by a subterfuge. The meeting had been convoked for four o'clock in the afternoon, and all those members who were disposed to take the oath for the edict had been requested to be in the hall on the stroke of the hour. They did not fail to be there, and the sitting was precipitately declared open. The deputies of the nobles, who had remained at table, were alone too late. When they came to take their places, all the members who had been present at the opening of the sitting had already answered to their names, and taken the required oath. The nobles had no longer any right to speak, the voting having already begun, and, finding that they would be forced to retire if they should refuse to follow the example set them, they gave in with a good grace.

The next day the most energetic measures were taken to obtain at once pledges of allegiance and fidelity to the edict, which all the members of the town councils were required to subscribe. The States had at first determined to appoint three commissioners to receive the oath from the magistrates, but, fearing that those who wished to dispense with it might be tempted to escape it by absenting themselves, they thought of a better plan. They sent a copy of the edict to all the town councils, accompanied by a form of oath, which the

magistrates were called upon to sign. Their signature was to be appended within the three weeks preceding the new session of the States, a refusal being considered equivalent to resignation.

The right of sitting in the municipal assembly was thus made subject to the condition of an oath. This injunction was received with perfect docility. One magistrate alone, a member of the council of Edam, excused himself, saying that, being old and deaf, he would not sign what he did not understand. When the States resumed their sittings, the oath had been taken by all who had any part in the government of the Province. The edict was sent to the courts of justice, with orders that they should conform themselves to it, and remained in the care of the Grand Pensionary, who, being more bound than anyone else to see it observed as a law of the State, and to refuse to allow any change in it, was destined to die a victim to the oath by which he had sworn to remain faithful to it.

Thus was brought about the act which the States called the 'Perpetual Edict,' with a presumption which was not justified by after events, in spite of the measures which they had taken to render it irrevocable. It gave the most complete satisfaction to the republican party, and seemed to assure to them the definite possession of the government. Some of the deputies who had voted for it considered it as marking the first day of liberty to their province. By leaving no possible office open to William II.'s son but that of the command of the army, the States of Holland flattered themselves that they should be secure against any princely government, without showing injustice towards the descendant of the country's liberator. They thought that in preventing his accession to the stadtholdership by the suppression of that office they had completely freed themselves.

Still they would have acted more prudently if, instead of openly breaking with traditions which dated back to the first days of the independence of the republic, and attempting to suppress the stadtholdership, they had contented themselves with lessening its importance by reserving to themselves

such prerogatives as might render it dangerous to the liberty of the people. The Grand Pensionary, much as he was opposed to the re-establishment of the stadtholdership, thought it would be rather dangerous than advantageous to abolish it openly. He would have preferred to proclaim it incompatible with the command of the army and navy, if he could have obtained the consent of the States-General. But he allowed himself to be too easily persuaded into another course, and in not preventing the States of Holland from taking too great an advantage of their victory he paved the way for a reaction sooner or later.

Whilst the votes were being taken for the Perpetual Edict, his cousin Vivien, the Pensionary of Dordrecht, was cutting up the binding of a book with a penknife. 'What are you doing?' asked with some surprise John de Witt, who was sitting near him. 'I am trying,' replied Vivien, 'the effect of steel upon parchment,' thus meaning it to be understood that the resolutions of the States, although inscribed on their registers, would be at the mercy of a sword as soon as the Prince of Orange was in the possession of the military authority.

The other provinces, considering themselves provoked by the Perpetual Edict, would not submit to the challenge which had been thrown down to them. The States of Zealand required the States-General to reply to the vote of the States of Holland, by admitting the Prince of Orange to the Council of State, and by appointing him without delay to the command of the army and navy. They demanded moreover that the other provinces should enter into no agreement which should interdict them from naming him stadtholder. The States of Friesland and of Groningen, whose governor was the young Prince of Nassau, not wishing to make him ineligible in default of the Prince of Orange for the command of the army and navy, were disposed to follow the example of Zealand. They desired their representatives in the States-General to oppose henceforth any proposal destined to make the two charges incompatible.

The States of Guelders, although inclined on their side to a separation of the civil and military powers, would not consent

to such a condition being imposed beforehand on the other provinces, and declared moreover that they would come to no terms until a captain- and admiral-general had been appointed.

The States of Overijssel, being deterred from any decision by the divisions in their Assembly, were obliged to stand aloof.

The States of Utrecht alone conformed their conduct to that of the States of Holland. After having declared in a preliminary sitting that no commander of the army could act as stadtholder of their province, they decreed the suppression of that office. But the co-operation of the States of Utrecht was not sufficient to enable the States of Holland to dissolve the coalition with which they were threatened. The other provinces, wishing to force them to yield under pain of disorganising the army and compromising the defence of the country, declined to dispose of the military commands until the Prince of Orange had been unconditionally appointed captain- and admiral-general. The Grand Pensionary, strongly convinced of the necessity of coming to some agreement in regard to military affairs, did all he could to avert this danger by offering to make concessions. He made use of his influence with the members of the States-General, who formed part of the committee on military matters, and gained their approval of an important proposal which was put forward by one of them, Ripperda tot Beursee, deputy for Guelders, under the name of the Project of Harmony. It was intended to smoothe away internal jealousies by offering guarantees favourable to the interests of the Prince of Orange. By the terms of this project it is true that no stadtholder of a province could be named captain- or admiral-general, but this incompatibility of the civil and military offices was only to be stipulated when the military appointment was made. The result was that the provinces remained at liberty to choose the Prince of Orange as stadtholder, if the command of the army and navy had not been given to him, and that they were not bound to enter into any preliminary agreement in order to obtain his admittance into the Council of State. Moreover, the post of captain- and admiral-general without being actually promised

was indirectly reserved to him, but the appointment was not to be made before he reached the age of twenty-two.

In default of the inheritance of his ancestors, which was not restored to him, the young Prince of Orange might now feel certain of enjoying some portion of the authority which had belonged to them, on the condition of waiting during the six years which would intervene before his majority.

The Grand Pensionary flattered himself that he had thus found a way of conciliating matters. 'I shall not fail,' he writes to the Councillor Pensionary of Zealand, 'to support this measure in the States of Holland.' He easily secured their assent, the deputies who were most opposed to the Prince of Orange's advancement having already pledged themselves, when they disposed of the commands of the army and navy, to appoint him captain- and admiral-general for life, instead of restricting themselves to a temporary appointment. By means of this concession, De Witt after some months' negotiation obtained the adhesion of the provinces of Guelders and Overijssel to the Project of Harmony. The States of Holland hastened to profit by it to urge the appointment of the superior officers of the army. Having skilfully given the other provinces an interest in the choice of the principal candidates by accepting those whom they presented, they went in a body to the States-General, and their energetic remonstrances, backed up by the members of the military commission of the federal assembly, had the success which they anticipated.

The army once reorganised, the States of Holland could wait in perfect security for the approval of the Project of Harmony by the three other provinces who still opposed it. By refusing to consent to it they could only injure the cause of the Prince of Orange, on whom they thus shut the entrance to the Council of State, as well as all chance of the command of the army and navy. But De Witt was too much interested in the success of the work of pacification which he had undertaken to leave it in suspense, and he caused all measures to be taken which might lead to the agreement of the dissenting provinces. The States of Holland persuaded the States-General to send two deputations to the provinces of Groningen

and Friesland, and to that of Zeeland. The principal management of it was confided to Fagel and Vivien, two members of their Assembly who had given proofs of their zeal and fidelity. Fagel's speech to the States of Friesland, at Leuwarden, was an eloquent justification of De Witt's policy. He demonstrated the necessity of agreement between the Provinces, to be brought about by the help of reciprocal concessions, and laid stress upon the advances that had been made by the States of Holland, who, in the interests of the Prince of Orange, had consented that the appointment of captain- and admiral-general should be not merely temporary. He represented the danger of leaving the civil and military offices combined in the hands of one man, who would be exposed to the suggestions of flatterers and courtiers, and might be tempted by ambition of sovereign power. He wound up by pointing out that once it was decided that the office of captain- and admiral-general should devolve upon the last descendant of the House of Orange, a premature appointment would do more harm than good. According to him it could not fail to give the young Prince the impression that he owed the command of the army and navy to his birth rather than to the good-will of the States, whilst he might prepare himself to exercise it and be forced to make himself worthy of the position by filling at first the functions of a member of the Council of State. Intimidated by this energetic intervention, the States of Friesland and, following their example, the States of Groningen appeared to be rather for than against conciliation. Having moreover their own special stadtholder, the son of Count William Frederick of Nassau, they cared less about the preservation or re-establishment of the stadtholder-ship than did the other provinces, and had no interest in prolonging resistance.

It was more difficult to get the States of Zeeland to agree. In vain the States of Holland asked that conferences might be held. They replied by recriminations to the report of their delegates, reminding them of the previous engagement by which the two provinces had promised to take no part in the nomination of a stadtholder without a preliminary agreement,

and complaining that these promises had been broken. The Project of Harmony had, however, prevented the negotiations being broken off, and De Witt hastened to renew them. 'I cannot imagine,' he writes to Peter de Huybert, the Councillor Pensionary of Zeeland, 'why the States of this province will not give the consent they are asked for. I hope it is not because the proposal is made by Holland.'

To gain the good-will of Peter de Huybert, De Witt had promised to obtain for his son a vacant place in the council of Flanders, to which was confided the jurisdiction that had remained in common between the Spanish Netherlands and the United Provinces. But the Councillor Pensionary of Zeeland remained intractable. He opposed a violent manifesto to the conciliatory address of the deputies whom the States-General had just sent to the States of Zeeland. Not content with declaring that Zeeland would refuse to consent to the separation of the two offices of stadtholder and captain- and admiral-general, he blamed in unmeasured terms the policy followed by the States of Holland since the death of William II. had made them masters of the government. As if for the purpose of provoking them, he wound up by an attempt at justifying the coup d'état of 1650, thus encouraging fresh attempts against their authority. Such violence of tone did him more harm than good. The States of Zeeland did, it is true, submit to the approval of their town-council the message proposed by their councillor pensionary, but the answer, equally moderate and conclusive, of the States of Holland deterred them from keeping up the controversy. The proceedings so skilfully conducted by De Witt's confidential agents had not moreover been without result. His emissaries succeeded in creating dissension in the resisting party, and ended by placing as rival authorities, in opposition to the Councillor Pensionary of Zeeland, two of the principal members of the States of the Province, Thibault and Ingolsel, contriving to procure them the support of the towns of Middleburg and Flushing. 'The present condition of affairs in Zeeland,' wrote Bampfield to De Witt, 'is much better than I could have hoped, when I began working with such care to bring them to the state they are now in.' 'It looks,' he wrote

at the same time to one of his correspondents at the French court, 'as if the opposition, which is already much weakened in Friesland, would eventually succumb in Zealand.'

The sentiments of the Prince of Orange seemed moreover the surest guarantee of agreement, and contributed largely to the success of the Grand Pensionary's policy.

Immediately after the passing of the Perpetual Edict, the States of Holland had sent a deputation to their ward, and had commissioned their First Minister to justify to him the resolution they had made. De Witt told him plainly that 'whilst there was not one single member of the assembly who did not look upon him as destined one day to command the armies of the State, neither was there one who did not detest the recollection of his father's enterprise.' He added that the suppression of the stadtholdership was intended to prevent the renewal of a similar attempt. The Grand Pensionary softened this communication by telling the young Prince, that the States of Holland, 'wishing to render him fitted to do good service to the republic,' would demand his admission into the Council of State, and he exhorted him to deserve their confidence, so that he might obtain the command of the army and of the fleet, as soon as he was of an age to exercise it. According to the despatch which reproduces this curious interview, William II.'s son was so great an adept in dissimulation that he not only withheld all useless lamentations, but further expressed his satisfaction and begged De Witt to thank the States of Holland for their consideration for his person and interests.

De Witt with the most loyal sincerity strove to persuade him of this. With this view he desired his special confidant, Colonel Bampffield, to transmit the most pressing offers for an agreement to Doctor Rumpf, the Princess-Dowager's physician, and one of the most esteemed advisers of the family of Orange. Bampffield, in accordance with the instructions given to him, entered into a correspondence with Rumpf, representing to him that the Prince's interests could only really be served by leaving them entirely in the hands of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, who, he writes, 'has both the capacity

and the will to give him useful and wise counsels, and has no less power than skill to procure the success of all that may be promised and undertaken in his favour.' 'In my opinion,' he adds, 'this great and good work, which will promote the advancement of the Prince, no less than his enjoyment of his allowance and the payment of his debts, ought to commence by mutual confidence given and received between his Highness and the Grand Pensionary, who I am sure for his part is very ready for it. It would, therefore, be advisable for his Highness to take the first and most convenient opportunity to see him and talk to him openly. His Highness will gain every advantage he can wish for, if he will only promise to engage in no cabals, but rather to do all he can to establish an agreement between the provinces and to follow the Grand Pensionary's advice.'

To give weight to these considerations, Bampffield represented 'how imprudent it would be in the young Prince to trust to promises from the other provinces which they could not keep if opposed by Holland;' and he asked 'that it might not be forgotten that if by the assistance of a lever a man can raise himself, on the other hand nothing can be drawn from nothing, as the Latin proverb says: *Ex nihilo nihil fit*.'

The Grand Pensionary's declarations confirmed these assurances. They are frankly expressed in his intimate conversations with the English ambassador, in whom he confided without reserve. He assured him that he never failed to see the Prince once or twice a week, and that he now bore him a special affection, doing all justice to his good qualities. He promised to obtain for him the appointment of captain- and admiral-general as soon as he was of age to command the army and navy. Lastly, he justified his opposition to the union of the two offices of stadtholder and captain- and admiral-general, by representing that such considerable powers united in the same hands would threaten the liberty of the republic. 'He could not forget,' he said, 'that this liberty had only survived by a miracle, under the government of the Princes of Orange—at one time through foreign wars, at

another by the moderation of Frederick Henry, and again by the premature death of William II. He sketched in a few lines the plan of his policy, which was that of conformity to law, confessing that had he been born a subject of the King of Spain, he should not have advised his ancestors to decree the deposal of their sovereign, but declaring, on the other hand, 'that in his capacity as minister of the States he was bound to do all in his power to uphold their authority.'

Such was the end at which he had been aiming by his persevering efforts, and which he seemed now to have reached. In tempering the Perpetual Edict by the Project of Harmony—to which he felt certain he could soon obtain the consent of all the Provinces—he flattered himself that he could make acceptable, even to William of Orange, a transaction which strengthened the republican government, and secured to the States the services of William I.'s last descendant, thus completing by his home policy the success of his diplomatic negotiations.

The Perpetual Edict, which appeared to disarm the Orange party by no longer allowing the young Prince of Orange to be an aspirant to power, had been passed between the treaty of Breda, forced upon England by a bold attack, and the Triple Alliance, which made the States-General the arbiters of France and Spain.

The supremacy of the republican party, and the greatness of the republic, left nothing to be desired. They insured the perfect success of a policy which, within as without, seemed the glorification of the work undertaken by the Grand Pensionary of Holland.

John de Witt's domestic life had been till now no less fortunate than his career as a statesman. For thirteen long happy years he had tasted the joys of mutual love. His wife had, by the charm of her affection, mitigated the troubles and sorrows inseparable from the tenure of power; and by her companionship had heightened the enjoyment of the brightest days of the Grand Pensionary's public life. When the peace of Breda was celebrated with rejoicings,

she had mingled with the light-hearted crowd which danced before John de Witt's house, and in company with her noble husband had prolonged far into the night her part in the popular festivity. She took her share in the recompense, as she had done in the labour. The absence of her husband, when she was expecting her confinement, and he left her in charge of their young children to expose himself to the dangers of the war with England, had tested her courageous resignation.

When De Witt proceeded to the Texel to superintend the fitting out of the navy, her first letter manifested her anxiety. 'Sir, and worthy husband,' she writes, 'this is to ask you if you will kindly take the trouble to inform me if I can remain here free from uneasiness as to any invasion of the English, in the event of the destruction of our fleet or other misfortunes. I have been much disturbed. I should be glad to know whether you will return home with the commissioners after the departure of the fleet, as it is reported that those gentlemen will remain to await the battle and do further service. Others say even that you will sail with the fleet, so that I am very uneasy, and should like to have from you the true account, to reassure me. But you must really tell me the truth, and not deceive me. I await a line from your hand by return, hoping it will serve to quiet me. With which I commend you to the Divine Providence, and remain, with greetings, your humble and devoted wife.'

The following month, when De Witt thought his presence on board necessary to repair the disasters of the naval campaign, she writes to him again: 'I have received your letter, which was very pleasant to me, as it gave me news of your health. I hope you will not fail to answer me, for now that I am deprived of the sight of your dear face, it is a great comfort to see at least your handwriting. I am afraid you are having a great deal of trouble down there. I hope you will spare yourself as much as possible. I long for the time when you will return home, but I fear it is still far off.' 'My dear Papa,' writes at the same time his eldest daughter, nine years old, 'Mama is longing for Papa, and wishes he was back, and

so do we all. All our relations beg to be remembered to Papa, and we drink his health every day.'¹

Some months later the loving solicitude of the wife shows itself in a growing anxiety. De Witt was on the high seas, on board Ruyter's vessel, in the presence of the enemy, and impatient to attack them. Wendela Bicker begs him to reassure her, praying 'that he will tell her the truth, and not put her off with trifles.' In another letter she speaks of her gratitude for God's blessings, and for the welfare of her husband. 'For myself,' she adds, 'it would be an unheard-of joy to see you again in good health, and I shall await the time with impatience. You expressed a desire to receive a letter from my hand, and I should not have failed you, but that I thought you knew that we are all in good health here. Your little son, who has had fever, is now perfectly recovered. As to myself and the other children and our friends, we are all well.' Although she seldom gives any place in her correspondence to public affairs—from which she always held aloof, contenting herself with giving news of the family—she tells her husband of the absurd rumours which are being spread about—'that he had fought with Admiral Ruyter, that he had been hung on the shore'—and adds proudly: 'You have no need to trouble yourself about them; when one does right, one can hold up one's head with tranquillity. Now,' she winds up, 'my heart wishes you and the whole fleet a good voyage and a happy return, for which I pray God, who best knows what is good.' The following year, the Grand Pensionary, having again been obliged to leave her, to settle the differences which had arisen between the officers of the fleet, she gently laments this, promising him 'to overcome the intense wish she had for his return.' 'I consider myself fortunate,' she tells him, 'to have a husband who places the service of his country before his private affairs, and I have good reason to be satisfied. I will try, therefore, to be calm under all circumstances, and learn to imitate you more and more.'

¹ The letters of the girl to her father (Archives of the Kingdom, and Collection of Hœufft van Velsen) are written in fluent French, in childish style and spelling, and are addressed, 'Monsieur, Monsieur mon Papa.'

De Witt had too masculine a mind ever to feel the weakness of conjugal affection to which his wife sometimes gave way, and he constantly encourages her to resist it. 'I learnt with pleasure,' he writes to her, during his naval expedition, 'your resolution to receive with submission from the hand of God all that His Divine Majesty may send us. I pray God to strengthen you in this more and more. You must thank Him for the favour He has shown us on this occasion, I being as strong and full of courage as I have ever been in my life under any circumstances; and sleeping at night, as usual, without waking. I hope it will be the same with you, as soon as the first novelty has worn off. Let us not in any way resist whatever stroke may menace us, but confide ourselves in God, and receive with cheerfulness anything it may please Him to send us. You need be under no anxiety about me, as you may be certain that all will go well with me in life as in death, and in the latter case infinitely better than in the former.' It was as the cry of a soul, already detached by the fatigues of the struggle from all earthly desires; but he hastened to suppress it, and, affection again coming uppermost, the husband and father reappears in the statesman. After having declared himself ready to die without regrets, he hastens to add: 'Do not fear, however, that I shall neglect to take all reasonable precautions to preserve my life for my country and for my dear family. Praying Almighty God that He will give you confidence and animate you with His Spirit, I conclude, and remain your humble servant and faithful husband.'

Thirteen years⁶⁸ of happy married life had brought him eight children, two of whom had died in infancy, and the youngest, Jacob, his grandfather's godson, was only a few months old. The fortune which he used with such moderation had filled up the measure of happiness of his married life. The inheritance he received from his mother-in-law, in addition to his wife's portion, is valued in a family inventory at 178,174 florins. He profited by this to add to his property the important domain of Heckendorp, which he acquired by purchase from Count de Mérode, one of the nobles of the

Province of Holland. Through the agency of his brother-in-law, Deutz, with whom he kept up a close correspondence, his patrimony was increased by many advantageous investments, and at his death he left to his children a property raised by irreproachable transactions to 492,660 florins. The new house which he had occupied for the last six years, spacious though simple in appearance, stood him in a rent of 250 florins. A few trees sheltered it in front, and the garden, which extended from the back of the dwelling, was joined by a bridge to that which adorned the beautiful residence of Prince John Maurice of Nassau. The Grand Pensionary had thus become a neighbour of the Prince of Orange, who had continued to reside in the former palace of his father, where the States held their sittings, and thenceforth he formed a member of the same ward, paying an entrance fee of forty florins. It was in their capacity as ward members that the son of the late Stadtholder and the Prime Minister of Holland, in accordance with the habits of the burgher society of their country, met at the solemn dinners of the corporation, at which John de Witt was present with his wife.

This quiet home life was too soon broken up, and John de Witt's domestic happiness darkened by the sorrows of premature widowhood. Wendela Bicker, weakened in health and but ill-recovered from the birth of her last child, had lately lost her youngest daughter, at the age of two years. She was separated from her other daughters, Anna, Maria, and Agneta, who were under medical treatment at Oirschot near Bois-le-Duc, with the celebrated physician, Arnold Fey, who had been two years previously summoned to France by Louis XIV. to his mother, Anne of Austria. John de Witt had just taken her to visit her family at Amsterdam, and she was preparing to go with him to the country house of one of her sisters, when she was suddenly attacked with an indisposition, which altered her plans and caused her to return to the Hague. Her illness increased so rapidly that a couple of days later she desired to have her children brought back to her. John de Witt sent one of his clerks, Bacherus, in all haste to fetch them, begging the doctor in whose charge they were to give

instructions in writing for the cure of his third daughter Agneta; and in the following letter addressed to his eldest daughter desired them to return at once: 'Your dear mother, whose illness continues, has expressed herself anxious to have you and your sisters with her. I commend you to the care of God, remaining, my dear daughters, your affectionate father.'

They arrived too late to see her again. The day after their father had sent for them, their mother died, aged only thirty-two years. Five days later the two bereaved families assembled for the funeral, and the coffin of Wendela Bicker took its place in the vault of the new church, to be followed only four years later by that of the Grand Pensionary. 'Sir,' writes to him in French the English ambassador, Sir William Temple—who had become his friend since they had negotiated together the Triple Alliance—'having shared so largely in your joys, and in the applause which the world so justly bestowed upon you, it is only reasonable that I should take part in your losses, and tell with equal sorrow and truth how I feel the last one which has befallen you. I had remarked how your home always brought you relaxation from the fatigues of public life, and that instead of the diversion so often sought in vice or extravagance, you have always found yours in the innocent converse of conjugal and parental affection. I also noticed how happily you had given over all household cares to a lady who now only lives in the remembrance and esteem of all who knew her, and I know but too well by that how terribly this loss must affect you, and that there is neither justice nor kindness in trying as yet to offer you consolation. I will therefore only say that, had it not been for this sad occasion, you would have missed the greatest opportunity of showing that strength of mind which is sometimes more easily overcome by the calamities of home and private life than by those of government or of war—for these latter harden one daily, whilst the others are infinitely softening. I beg you therefore not to neglect this opportunity of adding to your fame, and not to allow your regrets to make you forget that you have long been wedded to the cause of your country and of Christendom, and that to them you owe all your care and

affection.' Such was the funeral oration of a departed happiness pronounced by one who had been its favoured witness.

The letters of condolence, piously preserved by John de Witt amongst his correspondence, were many. Friends of the family, political friends such as Beverningh and De Groot, the principal personages of the State, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, Ruyter—who was strongly attached to De Witt—the widow of Major-General Brederode, elder sister of the Princess-Dowager, the ambassadors and the foreign ministers—amongst others Baron Pelnitz, envoy extraordinary from the Elector of Brandenburg, Count d'Estrades and Lionne, all condoled with the Grand Pensionary in his affliction.

He struggled to overcome it, giving heed to the religious consolations offered to him, and to the exhortations of those who urged him to summon to his aid his force of character and strength of mind. 'Sir,' he answers Lionne, 'although I have to thank God for having taught me, from my youth up, to bend my will to His, and not to increase my misfortune by useless regrets and wishes in opposition to Him, I cannot but confess that, in the domestic affliction with which it has pleased Him to visit me, I feel with profound satisfaction the helping hand with which my friends support me and endeavour to prevent my stumbling.' But he was none the less overwhelmed with the blow which struck him in carrying off 'her who was truly a half of himself.'

'You know,' he writes to Madame de Brederode, 'how intense are sufferings of this nature, and you have learned to pity those whom they overtake.' Nothing can be more heart-rending than the melancholy expression of his sorrow to which he gives way in a letter to Temple: 'You know,' he says, 'the greatness of my sorrow, since you know how great is the inestimable loss which I have suffered. I have tried to turn my thoughts to occupations capable of diverting them from an object which was formerly my highest joy, and is now my deepest sorrow; but I find that business only numbs the pain and does not cure it. If there were any remedy capable of closing the wound, it would no doubt come from the gentle and healing hand which you lay on it. I feel it, I confess, because

it probes the wound; but it follows it up with a balm which soothes and alleviates the pain. I receive it as I ought, and will try to profit by your consolations, and to struggle against my weakness by the aid of those reasons which are dictated to you not only by that Christian philosophy which you profess, but also by the faithful friendship with which it pleases you to honour me.'

The final gratifications which he was to receive in public life could not restore to him the happiness he had lost. Still he could not forget, as Temple had reminded him, that he had espoused the cause of his country. The States of Holland obliged him to retain his functions, and once more renewed the expression of their confidence. They could not dispense with the direction of the Grand Pensionary in foreign affairs just after the conclusion of the Triple Alliance, which was his work, and would not therefore accept the resignation which he urgently pressed upon them. His five years of office having expired, De Witt, according to custom, offered 'his apologies for any mistakes he might involuntarily have made,' and begged them 'to give him credit for good intentions.' The States answered by a vote of thanks to him for his conduct. They declared that they considered him to have deserved well of the republic and of the province of Holland, and the Grand Pensionary having left the Hall of Assembly whilst they were deliberating, they recalled him to make known to him their resolution, which was his best recompense. It seemed insufficient, however, to them. After having at the same sitting desired the commissioners who had drawn up his former instructions to prepare those which were to regulate the exercise of his fresh powers, they ordered the councillor deputies to let them know what special services they owed to him, that they might take steps to remunerate them.

A week later, July 27, 1668, John de Witt was unanimously re-elected Grand Pensionary, and on August 3 the States voted him a large sum as a testimony of their gratitude. For the last fifteen years he had only received as Grand Pensionary a salary of 3,000 florins, to which had been added during the last eight years the emoluments of the two offices of Lieutenant of Fiefs

and Keeper of the Seals of the Province, which brought him in another 3,000 florins. He had, no doubt, at his disposal a sufficiently large amount of secret-service money, which he himself valued at 40,000 florins a year, for the payment of his diplomatic correspondence and private sources of information; but this and more he employed in the payment of special secretaries charged with drawing up or copying confidential despatches, never hesitating at any outlay to obtain information which might be of service to the interests of the republic. He thus offered, in his first year of office, as much as 300 florins to find out what were the instructions given to the French ambassador, Chanut. He always paid the carriage of his own letters, whereas the Grand Pensionary Barneveldt had yearly charged 500 florins on this account. He only repaid himself for the cost of copying, which he had reduced from four to three sous a page. He even defrayed his clerks' expenses for warming and lighting. He paid his own house rent, and would not give his consent to a plan for building a house which would have served as a residence for his successors. 'Although his possessions are but moderate,' writes one of the French ambassadors, 'he does not seem anxious to add to them.' John de Witt's pride was to uphold the traditions of proud disinterestedness bequeathed by the noblest citizens of Rome and Athens to the great servants of free countries.

The States of Holland felt themselves humiliated by the inadequate pecuniary position of their Prime Minister. They would not consent to his being less well remunerated than their Receiver-General, to whom they paid 5,000 florins besides an allowance for house rent. They doubled his salary, making it up to 6,000 florins, in addition to his income from his other two offices, and did not stop at this liberality. They desired that De Witt should profit by it retrospectively dating from the time of his first entry into office, and upon a report of the councillor deputies enumerating all his services, allocated him a sum of 45,000 florins. This gratuity, calculated upon the basis of the last fifteen years of his ministry, corresponded to a supplementary salary of

3,000 florins a year, thus making his salary in the past equal to the 6,000 florins he was henceforth to receive. The nobles, whom he had served gratuitously as their pensionary in the Assembly of the States, were anxious on their side to show no less generosity. They again offered him the remuneration he had hitherto refused, and had recourse at last to the intervention of the States to force him to receive a donation of 15,000 florins. He received State inscriptions in payment of these various amounts. The States, as a final testimony of their satisfaction, renewed the Act of Indemnity, with a promise of a seat in one of the courts of justice when he should resign his office. The following month, after having obtained the customary authorisation from the Council of Dordrecht, of which he was still a member, John de Witt accepted that fourth nomination as Grand Pensionary which was to cost him his life.

Far from seeking the pecuniary benefits thus liberally bestowed upon him, he had urged his friends to restrict the amount. He appealed to the deputies of Dordrecht to reduce the sum of 100,000 florins, which they wished him to accept, to 45,000 florins, and the States, out of consideration for his scruples, did not follow up the proposal of the deputies of Amsterdam, made through one of their deputies, Valkenier, to raise his salary to 8,000 florins. Money payments in recompense of services rendered in dealing with public affairs as though they were his own, had always appeared to him superfluous. He had not spared himself in the task. An indefatigable worker, he had so multiplied his correspondence in the direction of home affairs and foreign negotiations, that the registers of his fifteen years of ministry comprise 22,191 pages, whilst those of the Grand Pensionaries who had preceded him from the time of Barneveldt scarcely exceeded that number during a period of sixty-seven years. The reports of the commissions in which he took part, and the transactions he had carried on, numbered 534, while his predecessors only left in writing eighty-five. The diplomatic despatches alone, at three sous a sheet, had in twelve years been worth 4,900 florins to his principal clerk, Van den Bosch.

De Witt had, at the same time, made some important retrenchments in all departments of the administration. His vigilance descended to the most trifling details, even to the reduction of the cost of copying and translating, which in ten years caused a saving to the Treasury of 100,000 florins. He had lightened the charges upon Holland by adding to the federal budget more than a third of the expenses of the embassies, of which Holland had hitherto had to cover the deficiency, thus since his appointment having saved an outlay which might be calculated at 2,000,000 florins.

He had moreover obtained from the other provinces a supplementary contribution for the purpose of repaying the sum, 1,500,000 florins, advanced to them by Holland when she undertook in the last war against England to provide funds for an increase of the naval forces. Finally, the great financial scheme which De Witt had successfully carried out at the very commencement of his ministry in 1655, namely, the reduction of the interest on the sinking fund, the extinction of life annuities, had prevented the increase of the national debt, in spite of loans successively contracted in the course of the late war amounting to about seventeen millions. A saving of 1,400,000 florins on the interest to be paid completed the profit realised.¹ Such was the account rendered of the administration of the Grand Pensionary in the carefully elaborated report drawn up by the councillor deputies to whom that duty had been entrusted by the States. The result at which they arrived was, that, including diplomatic presents which the Prime Minister had refused and which were valued at 150,000 florins, the pecuniary benefits which he would have derived from his labours, treating them as a man of business, would have been worth an honorarium of 567,500 florins. It was thus that the States rendered to De Witt the justice to which he had a claim by drawing up a species of balance

¹ According to M. Veégens (*Notice on Dutch Loans during the Administration of the Grand Pensionary de Witt*), the national debt in 1654, before the reduction of interest, was 6,907,790 florins. In 1671, after the loans for the war with England, it amounted to 5,509,519 florins, thus showing a reduction of 1,398,271 florins.

sheet, applying a custom of the Dutch burghers to the administration of public affairs.

His integrity was above suspicion and was recognised even by his enemies. 'Whilst his predecessors could receive any presents not specially prohibited,' wrote the councillor deputies in the memorandum asking for an increase of his salary, 'the Grand Pensionary has cut off all such ordinary methods of recognition; and the better to protect himself from them has caused them to be formally forbidden in his instructions.' De Witt remained always inflexible in his scruples on this point. His private letters showed that he even refused presents of game, barrels of biscuits, and baskets of hops. One of his friends writes to him: 'I have just received a little purse, the novelty of which seems to render it worthy to be offered to your wife, as a fairing. I have not forgotten your last rejection of a gift from me, and the good reasons you gave. So I will not again offer anything to yourself.'

His passion for the service of his country, as well as his disinterestedness, formed an insurmountable barrier to the liberalities of sovereigns who wished to gain him to their interests. The correspondence of the French ambassadors, De Thou, D'Estrades, and Pomponne, describe him as absolutely incorruptible. 'It is well,' writes De Thou, 'to support the Grand Pensionary by all honest and legitimate means, but he is a man to whom recompense must not be mentioned, as from his disposition and the position he holds he would look upon the proposal as an insult.' Louis XIV. on his side writes to D'Estrades, 'I should consider any amount well spent which would bring the Grand Pensionary entirely over to my interests. But it must be done with great caution, as, from the way in which he has been represented to me, he is a man to stand by his principles, and to glory in his refusal of such proposals.' Count d'Estrades confirmed this judgment, declaring 'that he considered him and his brother as amongst the few with whom such pecuniary offers would be of no avail;' and De Witt might well write proudly to Bruyninx, the envoy of the States at Vienna, on the occasion of some calumnious imputations which represented him in

certain foreign courts as having been bought by France. 'I trouble myself little about them; everyone here knows that I have never defiled myself with such infamies, and these reports will find no echo here.'

Indifferent to the attractions and vulgar pleasures of wealth, John de Witt was content with a very modest establishment. He had five clerks or secretaries for the despatch of public affairs, besides his chief clerk, Van den Bosch, 'an honest man, but of a servile nature,' who had replaced the faithless Van Messen; two domestic clerks or ushers, Bacherus and Van Ouvealler, to whom the States paid 600 florins a year, and who were his confidential agents, sufficed for his personal business. He had in his own service only a valet and a coachman. 'When he paid his visits of ceremony,' relates an eyewitness, Sir William Temple, 'the valet put on a plain livery coat, and followed the carriage in the street.' 'I have seen him at the Hague,' wrote a French ambassador, 'on foot like one of the townspeople, followed by a servant dressed in grey, who carried a red velvet bag in which were the most important papers in Europe, which he was going to lay before the Assembly of the States.' No outward show distinguished him from the other deputies and ministers of the republic. His table was frugal, and was laid only for his family and one or two friends. He had no luxuries, with the exception of a choice library which his son increased by many acquisitions. His house was open to all who desired to see him, and he made himself accessible to all without being familiar with anyone, thus combining dignity with simplicity.

De Witt kept himself at the same time on his guard against the jealousy to which the exercise of the preponderant authority exposed him, and which was such that the Elector of Saxony addressed his envoy's letters of credence to him instead of to the States-General. He was so faithful in the observance of the duties of his office that even in writing mere letters of politeness to foreign princes he never failed to point out to them 'that he never, if he could avoid it, entered into any correspondence except through the medium of the ambassadors and envoys of the States.' He never missed an occasion of

telling those who came to him to obtain favours that he had no power beyond that of proposing resolutions to the States, and carrying out in their name such as they had accepted. The following letter, which he wrote to the ambassador of the United Provinces in England, shows how scrupulous he was. 'Knowing as you do,' he observes, 'how easily the Dutch are alarmed lest a minister should take too much upon himself and, as they say, play the master; and also how disastrous such an impression is in a free republic for all those who share in the government, and especially for those whose functions are only temporary, I beg you in future to make no mention of me personally in your despatches.' He liked to exercise power, but avoided all ostentation.

The authority which he exercised as the elected minister of a republic caused his friendship to be sought by kings and their advisers, whilst at the same time his renown made the most illustrious personages of the time desirous to know and correspond with him. A manuscript despatch sent by M. de Callières, French ambassador at the Hague at the close of the century, gives a curious account of an interview between the Grand Pensionary and Cardinal de Retz as he received it from M. de Dickeritt, a former friend of John de Witt. 'Cardinal de Retz,' he writes, 'being in hiding in Holland, resolved to see the Pensionary, and to make himself known to him before he left this country.' This was in 1666. He went in plain clothes to his reception in his house at the Hague, and after having allowed the more eager to precede him, he drew him aside, telling him he was a foreigner who desired to speak to him in private. The Grand Pensionary, without asking him who he was, begged him to enter his study, where he rejoined him almost immediately, and the Cardinal de Retz said to him, 'I know, sir, that you are French by inclination, and that you have great consideration for the Court of France; that M. d'Estrades, who is minister here, is my enemy and would do anything to have me in his power. I know, moreover, that he is your particular friend; nevertheless, I cannot quit this country without seeing and knowing a man of your worth, and testifying to the esteem I have for your merits,

by making myself known to you. I am that Cardinal de Retz who has had the misfortune to fall into disgrace with the King. Do not refuse me the pleasure of spending an evening with you.' The Grand Pensionary, touched by this confidence, thanked him warmly; and in order to be more at liberty to converse without compromising the Cardinal, invited him to his country house, where he would be ready to receive him. The Cardinal de Retz said afterwards to M. de Dickeritt, that he had been no less charmed by De Witt's breadth of mind than by his gentleness and modesty.

The superiority of his talent and the greatness of his character made him worthy to rank in the highest place. 'Nothing escapes him,' was the verdict of Ruyter, a judge capable of appreciating him. It was enough for him to wish to understand, and everything was clear to him. His profound knowledge of the varied interests of the principal States and his natural versatility of mind rendered him, in a very short time, one of the ablest negotiators of his day. He could foresee as well as overcome all diplomatic difficulties, and always recommended the republican envoys to observe such circumspection in their conduct and correspondence as to give no possible cause of complaint to foreign courts. His ability enabled him to make capital out of the most intricate situations. 'The example to follow,' he writes to Van Beuningen, 'is that of the fisherman who holds his line in the water, however troubled it may be, so that should a fish take the bait, he is ready to draw it in.' The quickness of his penetration enabled him to detect all intrigues, and it was by his straightforwardness that he generally baffled them. He inspired the confidence which he felt himself, having gradually got rid, as he told Temple, of an inclination to suspicion, which had led him into many mistakes.

Having the power both of penetrating the thoughts of others and of concealing his own, the Grand Pensionary's sole *ruse* was silence, to which those he was negotiating with were so much accustomed, that they never could tell whether he was silent from premeditation or from habit. He liked to go straight to the point, and would not allow himself to be

deterred by any obstacles placed in his way by the complicated machinery of the republican constitution, and he had now once more given proof, by the Triple Alliance, that he could act with as much decision as promptitude in the conduct of a negotiation.

Such qualities, joined to a great gift of persuasion, an immense aptitude for work, and most uncommon strength of will, insured him the lead in the States of Holland, whom he had made masters of the States-General. He was said to be 'their eye, their tongue, and their arm.' The authority which he exercised in their assembly, and that which he had acquired for them over the other provinces, placed the government of the republic in his hands. 'His is the intelligence, so to speak,' writes De Thou, 'which guides the government wheel.' A powerful speaker, more by argument than by eloquence, always master of himself, never allowing himself to be betrayed into imprudent or violent expressions, he possessed the art of arranging those compromises to which the States constantly had recourse to bring their deliberations to a conclusion. From the very commencement of his ministry he merited the description given of him by the French ambassador, Chanut, of 'an ingenious man, familiar with all expedients.' 'Hardworking,' writes De Thou, 'whilst most of his countrymen are very lazy, he alone thoroughly knows the secret and course of affairs, since they all pass through his hands, and he only communicates so much of them as he chooses to his confidants—and thus he maintains himself in office.' Much taken up with his health, of which he was always careful, and thinking little about his life, which he was always ready to sacrifice, he devoted himself unreservedly to the duties of his ministry.

As guardian of the constitution of his country, commissioned by the chief article in his instructions to preserve intact the privileges, rights, customs, and usages of the province of Holland as well as the lawful authority of the States, he considered himself bound by the oath he had taken never to allow of its being assailed, and he was resolved to defend with equal fidelity and courage the charge confided to him. An

allegorical picture of the time represents him as a swan with extended wings, protecting its nest from the dogs who are swimming round it, with this explanatory inscription: 'The Grand Pensionary;' 'Holland;' 'The enemies of the State.'

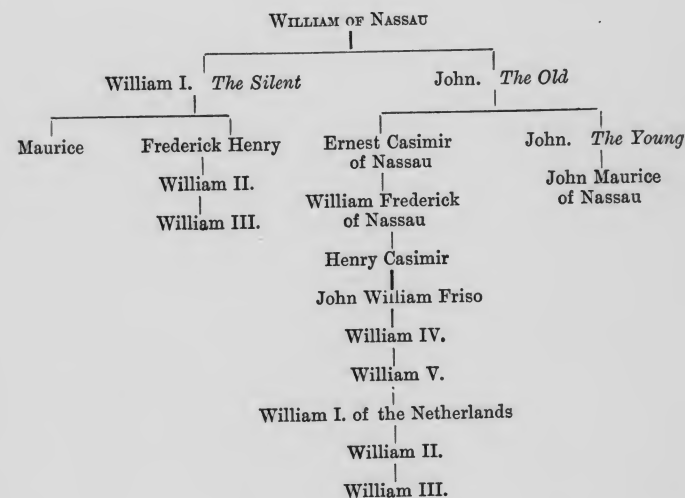
Amongst his portraits by the great painters of the day, including Baan and Netscher, the one which ranks as a masterpiece of Dutch painting is that by John Baan, belonging to the museum at Amsterdam, and of which the finest engraving is by Lambert Visscher. It represents De Witt at the bar of the States of Holland, with the members seen in their places. He holds in his hand the seals of which he was the keeper, and stands in the attitude he maintained when he was dominating the Assembly by his words. The portrait which most resembled him was, according to the most authentic testimony, that on the engraving of which his eldest daughter wrote these words: 'This engraving is the one which best recalls Papa.' It is the work of Netscher. Engraved by Bary and published by Engelvaert in 1670, it bears an inscription in verse by Gerard Brandt, consecrated to the defence of John de Witt. The Grand Pensionary is represented in full face, standing, wrapped in a Japanese robe, which he holds crossed over his chest, his hair falling in curls on his shoulders, and his left hand supported on a balustrade, while his countenance bears the calm and thoughtful expression of the statesman.

Like so many others, he spent himself in the ungrateful service of the public by remaining too long in power. But the fifteen years of his ministry, so gloriously filled, had enabled him to place a small republic on an equality with the greatest monarchies of Europe; and to keep in the background during the entire minority of William II.'s son the Orange party, which deprived of a leader would have fatally compromised the interests of the United Provinces in all the dangers of a minority.

The Grand Pensionary none the less had to bear the crushing weight of misfortune. He was to expiate the error of having presumed too far on the power of the United Provinces and the attachment of the Dutch middle class to the government which had placed the power in their hands. De

Witt perished under the blows of a foreign invasion which he had done all he could to avert: a victim to the popular fury, which might tear him to pieces but could not deprive him of his fame; and he justified to posterity the encomium bestowed upon him by two foreign ambassadors—his contemporaries—who said that if he had allowed himself to be blinded, it was by his passion for the greatness and liberty of his country.

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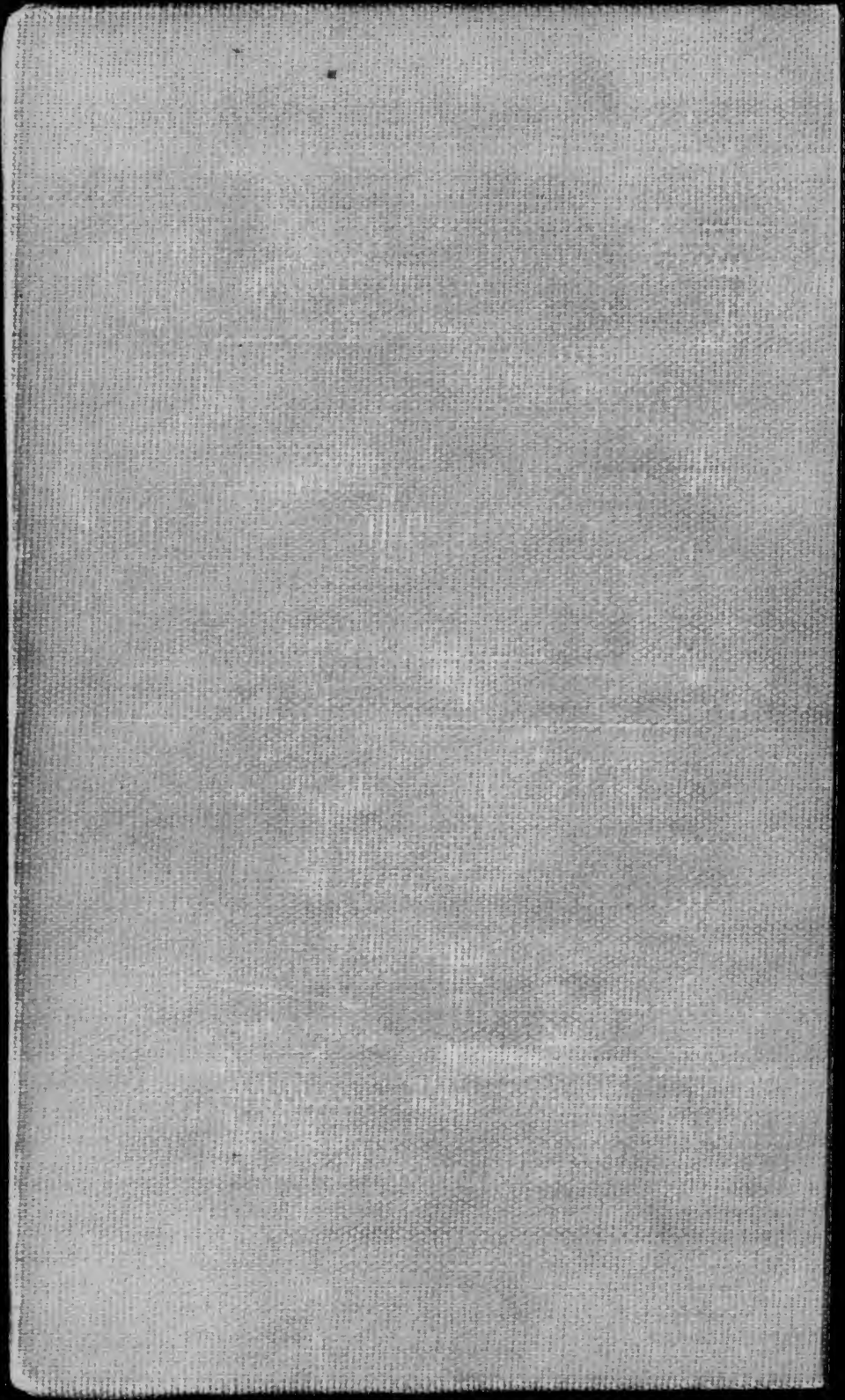
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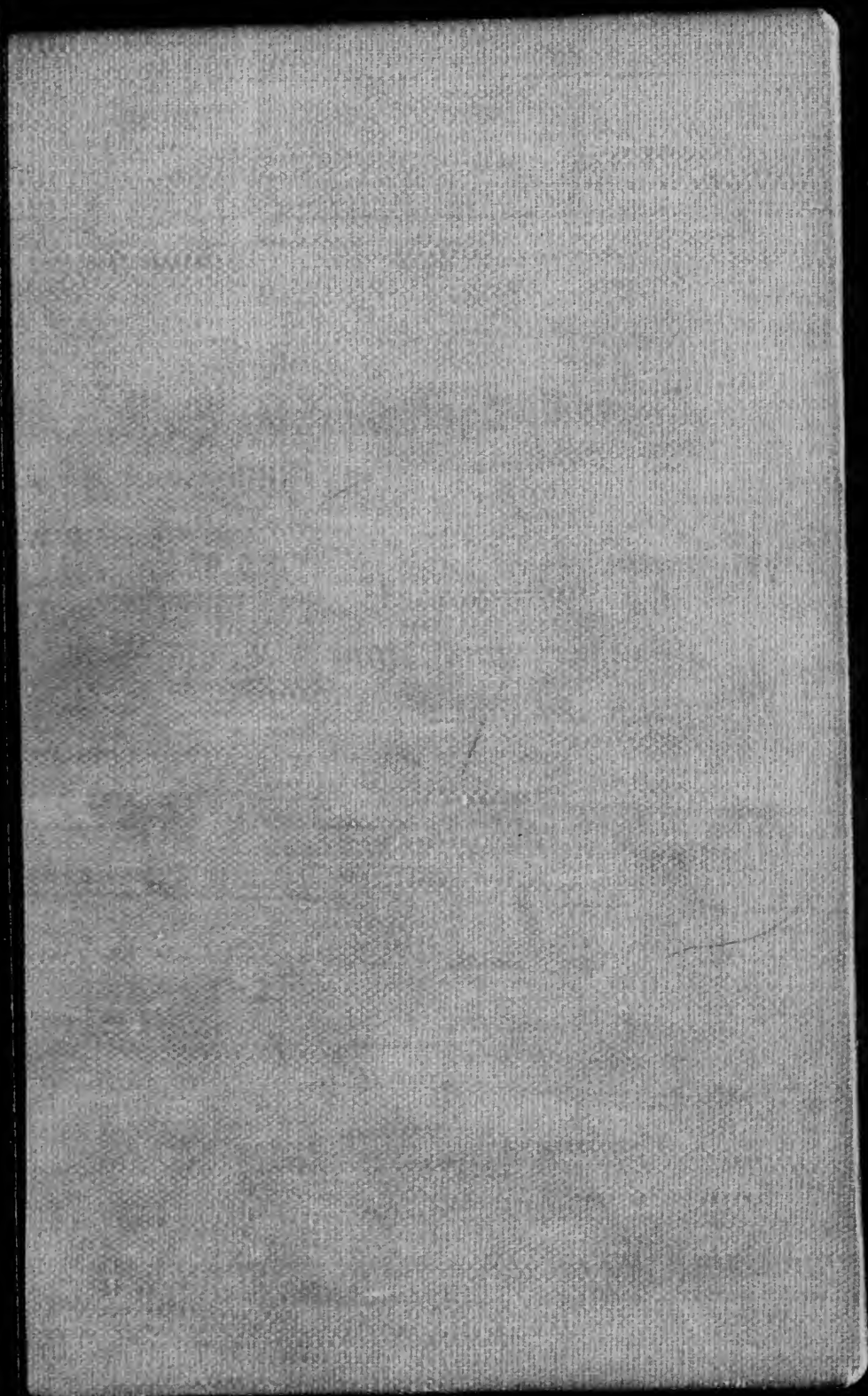
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JOHN DE WITT

GRAND PENSIONARY OF HOLLAND

OR

TWENTY YEARS OF A PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC

BY

M. ANTONIN LEFÈVRE PONTALIS

TRANSLATED BY S. E. AND A. STEPHENSON

IN TWO VOLUMES

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JOHN DE WITT.

CHAPTER IX.

ILL-FEELING OF KINGS TOWARDS A REPUBLIC—DISSOLUTION OF THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE.

Prosperity of the United Provinces—Growth of their colonial power—Diplomatic relations in Europe—Negotiations for the extension of the Triple Alliance—Difficulties in obtaining satisfaction for Sweden from Spain—De Groot sent as ambassador to Stockholm—Guarantee of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle—The Act of Triple Concert—Increased weakness of Spain—French negotiations for the cession of the Netherlands—Their danger to the States-General—Spain lets them drop—Defection of England—Hostility of Charles II. and his Ministers—Temple commissioned to reassure the States—De Witt's first suspicions—Renewal of the disputes—Van Beuningen's embassy to England—His illusions—France seeks a rupture—Recall of Count d'Estrades—Embassy of the Marquis de Pomponne—His first interviews with De Witt—Desire of the Grand Pensionary to be on better terms with France—Explanation given to Pomponne by Van Beuningen—Renewal of negotiations for the *cantonment* of the Netherlands in the event of the death of the King of Spain—Refusal of Louis XIV. to continue them—He reveals to Pomponne his designs upon the United Provinces—Invasion of Lorraine—Dispossession of Duke Charles IV.—Vain protests of the States—Rejection by Louis XIV. of the Emperor's offer of mediation—Irritation of the Emperor—His demand to be admitted into the Triple Alliance—Understanding between England and France—Recall of Sir William Temple—His last interview with De Witt—Failure of Van Beuningen's embassy to London—Negotiations for an alliance between Charles II. and Louis XIV.—Journey of the Duchess of Orleans to England—Treaty of Dover—Death of the Duchess of Orleans—Treaty of London—Warnings given to the States—Last illusions of John de Witt—The United Provinces threatened with retaliation for the Triple Alliance.

THE Republic of the United Provinces seemed now free to enjoy with legitimate pride the prosperity insured to her by the re-establishment of peace abroad, and the pacification of civil discords, those two great benefits of the policy which

John de Witt had pursued with such far-sighted perseverance. After defending her maritime independence against England, she had secured her territorial independence by opposing the Triple Alliance to those projects of annexation of the Netherlands which would have made the King of France a formidable neighbour. She thought to have found sufficient protection against his threatened anger, in the support of the powers interested in preventing the aggrandisement of his kingdom, and hoped moreover that she had effected a reconciliation with Louis XIV. not only by insuring him the tranquil possession of that part of the Netherlands which she had induced Spain to give up to him, but also by leaving him the hope of a future understanding in the event of the succession to the Spanish monarchy becoming open.

At home, the preservation of the republican form of government appeared secured by the Perpetual Edict, which by abolishing the stadtholdership in the province of Holland, and leaving only military offices open to the Prince of Orange, prevented him from making himself master of the supreme power. The States of Holland, who had become in some sort the heirs of the stadtholders, exercised in apparent security a political supremacy which shed lustre on the whole confederation. They could now enjoy their well-earned ease. 'The deputies of the States,' writes a contemporary, 'have so little business to transact that the day before yesterday, none being submitted to their deliberation, they entered and quitted the Assembly almost at the same moment, a thing which has not happened for more than twenty years.'

The greatest States might have envied the happy fate of the republic. She had provided for all the expenses of war and peace, and had never failed to find money. Whilst unfalteringly supporting the burden of three naval campaigns against England, she found means for constructing at the Hague a cannon foundry, which remains to this day. At the same time the long avenue was being completed which leads from the Hague to the port of Scheveningen, the inauguration of which was celebrated in the elegant lines of Huyghens, formerly private secretary to the Stadtholder William II.

As soon as they were relieved from the burden of the extraordinary expenses imposed upon them by the war with England, and by the armaments for the defence of the Netherlands, the States of Holland undertook the task of again putting their finances into good order. This was endangered by the loans which had deprived them of the advantage of the last reduction of interest, and which in fourteen years had risen to 17,000,000 florins. They contented themselves for the moment by paying off 1,000,000 florins, and did not venture upon the more effectual measures for lightening the debt advised by the Grand Pensionary. Fearing to displease the bondholders, they refused to allow a second reduction of interest from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 per cent., which would have enabled them to re-establish the sinking fund. They showed themselves equally averse from the proposal of a loan of 1,200,000 florins, to be applied to this purpose, and which would also have served to form a reserve fund. They preferred to attend to the suggestions of an exaggerated economy and to reduce the public expenditure, more particularly that of the army; and were in haste to benefit the taxpayers by relieving them from the most onerous imposts, such as the tolls levied on travellers by land or water, and reducing by one-half the tax upon capital.

They succeeded thus in giving a new impetus to commerce. The shares of the East India Company, which had risen between 1656 and 1663 from three hundred and eighty to four hundred and seventy florins, rose still further and returned interest at 50 to 54 per cent. The merchant vessels of Holland covered the ocean. The population continually increased; the principal towns were obliged to enlarge their boundaries, and new houses were rising in such numbers that at Amsterdam the duties upon building materials were farmed out at 15,000 florins above the usual amount. The progress of agriculture was no less satisfactory. The production of wheat had been so largely increased that one village near Haarlem paid as much as 80,000 crowns in duties upon grinding. Comfort and prosperity rewarded the inhabitants for

the sacrifices they had made for the independence and greatness of their country. Such were the good effects of a beneficent government, which under the noble guidance of the Grand Pensionary de Witt had brought the United Provinces through the trials of a foreign war with the lustre of victory; had procured for them by its treaties the most brilliant diplomatic successes, and seemed at the same time to have completed the work of internal pacification. There appeared to be no danger to be avoided henceforth but that of the abuse of riches; and the former republic of the 'beggars' had nothing to fear but the risk of too great prosperity.

She was represented abroad with royal magnificence. The ordinary residents, it is true, only received 3,000 florins, but the salaries of the principal ambassadors, particularly the ambassador to France, rose to 12,500 florins. The regulations concerning the expenses of ministers sent on extraordinary missions allowed them in addition 400 florins for their journey; 40 florins a day for their table if there were two, and 47 if there were three; 6 florins for lodging; and 11 florins for horses and carriages. An allowance was also made for their suite, which comprised a chaplain, who was paid 50 florins a month; a secretary and steward, who received 200 florins for the journey; and four footmen, whose wages were 20 florins a month each. Count d'Estrades, the ambassador of Louis XIV., writes accordingly, 'that he wishes he were treated as the States treat their ambassadors extraordinary: giving them a steward who makes all purchases and defrays all expenses at the cost of the State, and granting them each on their return a present of 6,000 florins; while his own embassy—the salary of which is only 12,000 florins per annum, with all expenses to be paid—has already cost him in four years 100,000 crowns of his own money.' The envoys of the States-General were thus envied even by the representatives of the King of France.

On the most distant shores, as well as in their immediate neighbourhood, the United Provinces made their power respected. The condition of their colonies became more and more prosperous. The East India Company, whose president, John Maatsuyker of Amsterdam, remained five-and-twenty

years in office, maintained 160 vessels, and, notwithstanding the division of profits among the shareholders, had a reserve fund of 10,000,000 florins. It had extended its transactions as far as Japan, had discovered a gold mine in the island of Sumatra, and had acquired the sovereignty over the whole of Ceylon. It had besides avenged the murder of some subjects of the United Provinces who had been killed by the King of Macassar, and imposed upon him a treaty by the terms of which he had to pay to the Company a thousand slaves or their value in gold annually, to reserve the trade of the island to the Dutch to the exclusion of every other nation, and to cede all that portion of his dominions which had been conquered. The neighbouring kings, alarmed, hastened to accept conditions of peace which placed them in subjection to the republic, whose rule extended thus to the Molucca Islands—4,000 leagues from the mother country.

Interested in protecting their commerce in European waters as well as in the East, the States-General had sent to Constantinople the former secretary of embassy, Croock, who died on his way out, a victim to the earthquake of Ragusa in 1667. They replaced him by Justin Colyer, a lawyer whose diplomatic abilities left much to be desired, and who represented them at the court of the Sultan Mahomet IV. 'without doing them any great honour by his behaviour or by his despatches.' The Sultan received him in state, treated him like the ambassadors of crowned heads, and acceded to his demands by guaranteeing the free navigation of the Mediterranean to the Dutch vessels constantly threatened by the corsairs of Algiers and Tunis.

The States-General in consequence remained deaf to the despairing appeal of the republic of Venice, which vainly implored the aid of Christendom to save Candia, besieged by the Turks. The Venetians had sent the secretary of the republic, Marchesini, to obtain the assistance of the States. The Grand Pensionary, alarmed for the fate of this island, which protected the whole Archipelago and even Italy against the progress of the Ottoman power, proposed the despatch of a reinforcement of 2,000 men and invited the co-operation of England. But

the hesitation of England and the opposition of Amsterdam prevented the carrying out of his proposal. Candia, left to its fate, fell after an heroic resistance, and the alliance of the United Provinces with Turkey remained unimpaired. The States-General hoped to profit by it to dissuade the Sultan from a fresh war with the German Empire, now threatened with a Turkish invasion, and thus to help to preserve the peace of Europe, of which they considered themselves the guardians.

In every court and every capital their diplomacy was at work, and, excepting in rare instances, was marked with success. With Portugal, through their envoy Barlaeus, they settled the colonial disputes to which the neighbourhood of the Portuguese possessions in the Indian Ocean had given rise, and the negotiations concerning which had been vainly prolonged during seven years. The arbitration offered to Temple, in his private capacity, secured the conclusion of a treaty by which the East India Company kept the conquests it had made on the coast of Malabar, until the Portuguese Government should have reimbursed to it the sum of 2,500,000 of cruzados which they acknowledged as a debt.

It was of still more importance to the States-General to maintain relations with the northern courts, both to appease any disputes which might lead to fresh wars, and to draw closer the bonds of old friendships. Though forced for the moment to affect to take no notice of the affront they had received from the Czar Alexis, who had grossly ill-treated their resident in Sweden, Heinsius, when sent to Moscow on an extraordinary mission, they made advances towards the new King of Poland, Michael Wiesnowiecki. The prudent neutrality which they had maintained towards his competitors for the throne, the Duke de Neuburg and the Prince de Condé, permitted them to send him an ambassador with their congratulations. After vainly offering the post to the two burgo-masters of Amsterdam, they made choice of John de Wit, councillor of Dordrecht and cousin of the Grand Pensionary. The latter, who had been annoyed by the intolerance of his cousin's republican opinions, was glad to send him to a distance, but had no reason to congratulate himself on having placed in his

hands negotiations in the conduct of which the envoy of the United Provinces did not make proof of all the discretion needed, and more than once incurred the censure of the Grand Pensionary. The King of Poland, flattered by the advances made to him by the ambassador, received him with confidence. He expressed to him the anxiety he felt at the projects of the King of France, and his desire to resist him. The States, in order to give Louis no ground for complaint, caused the despatch to be burnt in which they were informed of this declaration.

The good understanding with the court of Copenhagen was still more useful to the United Provinces, and they took care to prevent its being endangered. The inveterate hatred between Denmark and Sweden—in consequence of which, writes Lionne, 'their hounds would never hunt together'—was such that the States-General, by joining with Sweden in the Triple Alliance, had inevitably alienated Denmark. They had no confidence in the arbitration of the King of France, to whom King Frederic III. had submitted the pecuniary differences which had not been regulated by the last treaty of alliance concluded between Denmark and the United Provinces. They wished therefore to induce the new King, Christian VI., to come to a direct understanding with them. To attach him to their cause, not content with the services of Lemaire, their ordinary resident in Denmark, they commissioned their envoy to Poland, De Wit, to go first to Copenhagen to congratulate the new King on his accession to the throne. They hoped thus to succeed in bringing to a favourable termination the negotiations concerning the arbitration. 'It appears very probable,' writes Bernard, the French agent at the Hague in the following year, 'that Denmark will henceforth unite herself more closely with this republic.'

These various negotiations were but a secondary work of the diplomacy of the States-General. They thought themselves called upon by the Triple Alliance to take the lead in European politics, in order to preserve Europe from the danger of a conflict between France and Spain. Accordingly, to avert the renewal of the war constantly threatened between the two

great rival monarchies, they proposed to include other states in the league which they had concluded with England and Sweden. They desired also that it should be made to guarantee the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle concluded between the two belligerent powers; and flattered themselves that this object once attained they would have nothing more to fear for their own security. Anxious then to complete the great work for whose success he had never ceased to labour, the Grand Pensionary of Holland was careful to secure full diplomatic powers to the commissioners who had negotiated the Triple Alliance, and who faithfully carried out his instructions.

The States-General thought with justice that they might count upon the Swiss Cantons. They hoped, writes De Witt, to find their advantage in the close union of two republics founded on the same principles and allied by the same interests. It is true that the Swiss Cantons had remained in alliance with the King of France, by whom they were subsidised. But their relations had become somewhat strained of late years in consequence of the strictness which Colbert had shown in regulating their pecuniary allowances. The commissioners of the States-General sought to gain some advantage from this dissatisfaction, and welcomed as an advance the mission to the Hague with which a gentleman from the Canton of Berne, François de Bonsteten, had just been charged. He was instructed to come to an agreement with the States of Holland as to the levying of some Swiss troops, of which he would have liked to obtain the command. The States of Holland offered to take into their pay three or four companies of eighty men each, on condition that the Cantons should give them 3,000 men if they were in need of them. They were encouraged in this idea by De Witt, who wished to insure to the republic in case of war a body of picked soldiers, and also to provide the States without delay with a force which by its foreign origin would be independent of the Prince of Orange, should the son of William II. be one day raised to the rank of captain-general. The wish of the Cantons to retain the right of recalling their troops kept these arrangements in suspense. The States-General, however, profited by them to urge

the conclusion of a diplomatic agreement by which the Cantons should be admitted to the Triple Alliance. Thinking themselves secure of the Protestant Cantons, they applied through the court of Spain to the Catholic Cantons, but could not prevent their negotiations being held in check by the skilful measures of the King of France.

From Germany the States-General could hardly expect to receive any efficient support. The empire, divided and dismembered by the treaty of Westphalia, was, according to the opinion expressed by the Grand Pensionary, nothing but 'a skeleton, of which the different parts were attached not by sinews but by wires, and which had no power of voluntary movement.' The States-General had accordingly until now neglected to seek the alliance of the German princes. They could not indeed have secured it except by consenting to satisfy their pecuniary demands, which they did not feel themselves called upon to do. Believing that the United Provinces were in no danger, and that they had therefore only the Spanish Netherlands to protect, the States-General considered that the German princes were so much interested in preventing their conquest by France that they would be compelled to defend them without any necessity of paying for their assistance. They contented themselves with settling the local disputes between the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Brandenburg, and kept up friendly relations with the Princes of Brunswick-Luneburg, having through John de Witt insured the favourable disposition of their principal ministers and envoys: Count Waldeck, Müller, Secretary Knopff, and Wicquefort—who was one of the confidants of the Grand Pensionary. There was no need for them to make any advances to the Archbishop-Elector of Mayence, who, having been a most devoted adherent of French policy, was ready now to give the signal for resistance, and was foremost in proposing a defensive league with the United Provinces. De Witt received his offers favourably, but without departing from the strictest reserve, for fear of rashly provoking the King of France.

In order to obtain the co-operation of the German princes more easily and more surely, the States-General were negotiating

at Vienna in the hope of bringing the Emperor into the Triple Alliance. They had no suspicion of the secret treaty that he had concluded with France and by which the division of the Spanish monarchy was settled, Louis XIV. having taken care to keep it concealed. They hoped to obtain success for their efforts by acting in concert with the court of Madrid, to whose advice and reproofs it seemed impossible that the Emperor should be indifferent. At the same time they resolved to send Prince John Maurice of Nassau as ambassador extraordinary to Vienna. But reassured by the preliminaries of peace between France and Spain, they gave up this idea on account of the expense of such an embassy, which seemed now needless. They contented themselves with being represented by a deputy of their assembly who could not carry the same weight: Hamel Bruyninx, their former agent at Cologne and Frankfort, and councillor and sheriff of Bois-le-Duc. His mission was entirely unsupported. The States-General had not secured themselves any champion of their interests at the court of Leopold I., and it was not with the Emperor in person that their envoy could negotiate to any purpose. Destined from infancy for the priesthood, before the death of his elder brother made him heir to the imperial crown, Leopold I. after he came to the throne still retained more taste for devotion and pious exercises than for the duties of a sovereign. 'He is not like your master, who acts in everything for himself,' said one of his ministers in confidence to the French ambassador, 'he is more like an image which you can carry about at pleasure, and set up as you like.' Feeble and vacillating, silent and a lover of solitude, he distrusted himself. Instead of ruling he preferred to be ruled, and was long before he assumed to himself the exercise of imperial power. His political incapacity did not, however, imperil the interests of Germany during a long reign of forty years, which yet was not spared the trials of wars and invasions.

His early youth had been guided by his mother, the Dowager-Empress Eleanor, Princess of Gonzaga, and he had since fallen under the dominion of the ambassador of Louis XIV., Nicholas Bretel, Chevalier de Gremonville, who had acquired

the greatest ascendancy over him, and who flattered himself 'that he had only to open his mouth to obtain anything that he wanted.' Well versed in palace intrigues, and understanding how to work the springs of the most astute policy, the Chevalier de Gremonville had rendered eminent services to the King of France in the last four years. He had distinguished himself in the embassy confided to him, both by his intellectual gifts and by his personal qualities; and his despatches, which do him honour as a writer, place him in the front rank of the diplomatists of his day. Having already represented France at the court of the Emperor Ferdinand III. he held in his hands the clue to all the negotiations entrusted to him. On his return to Vienna he found himself anew on a stage suitable for the performance of a great part in diplomacy. For nine years he filled it brilliantly, baffling, with indefatigable dexterity, all the intrigues by which he was opposed.

He found a worthy adversary in Baron Lisola, the Spanish envoy to London, who had constituted himself the most active adviser of a coalition against France. Lisola had received authority to visit the Hague, where he obtained the assistance of the new imperial resident, Cramprigt, 'whose accommodating temper made him particularly acceptable to the States.' In conjunction with him, Lisola had lost no time in coming to an agreement with the Grand Pensionary, whilst the Emperor's ministers were assuring the Chevalier de Gremonville that his powers had been so limited 'that he was bound hand and foot.' Notwithstanding the hesitations of the Emperor, and the opposition and jealousy of his councillors, 'this Mercury,' as Louis XIV. called him, 'made such good use of his quicksilver' that he changed the dispositions of the court of Vienna. Unknown to the French ambassador, Leopold pledged himself in writing to the Queen-Regent of Spain 'to defend the Netherlands if they were attacked;' even declaring himself willing 'to become a member of the Triple Alliance to make it more secure.' It was not until the following year that Gremonville succeeded in discovering this promise.

The disgrace of the Prime Minister, Prince Auersperg, was

another palpable check to the French policy. Jealous of his influence, his rival Prince Lobkowitz had induced the Spanish Government to accuse him of maintaining a correspondence with France; and the Emperor had been obliged to dismiss him from his council, as the Queen-Regent of Spain declared 'that she should refuse to hold any communication with him.' The Grand Pensionary took advantage of the removal of Prince Auersperg to urge the court of Vienna to put an end to its usual hesitation, and to make up its mind—not merely in favour of Spain, but also in favour of the signatories of the Triple Alliance. Leopold's uneasiness favoured the success of these negotiations. He was beginning to be alarmed at the ambitious projects attributed to Louis XIV., and had taken umbrage at a book printed at Paris with the title of 'Just Claims of the King of France upon the Empire.' 'Sweden having finally acceded to the Triple Alliance,' writes De Witt to the ambassador of the States-General in England, 'the time has come to include the Emperor in it, that he may bring with him all the German sovereigns.'

The States-General had encountered great difficulties before persuading Sweden definitively to confirm the treaty of the Triple Alliance, it having been only conditionally agreed to by the Swedish ambassador, Count Dohna. The condition to be fulfilled was the payment of the subsidies claimed by Sweden as the price of her interference in favour of the Netherlands. The States-General had no intention of undertaking this themselves. As their ambassador represented to the court of Sweden, 'they were bound to look closely after all expenditure, as their finances, which were only supplied by taxation, belonged to the public and not, as in a monarchy, to the sovereign.' To obtain agreement from Sweden to the convention of London which confirmed the treaty of the Triple Alliance, they had consented to guarantee to her, in conjunction with England, the sum of 480,000 crowns, but they insisted on the payment of this by Spain.

The Queen-Regent refused to promise this. The Governor of the Netherlands, to whom she had given full powers, constantly evaded the demands of the deputies of the States-

General who had been despatched to Brussels, and disheartened them by his determined ill-will. Vainly the Grand Pensionary appealed to Temple, who had removed to Brussels in order to employ his influence with the Governor. 'I beseech you,' he writes, 'to represent warmly to his Excellency that he will ruin the affairs of the King his master by his delays and irresolution; and that if he continues the same course they will be past all remedy in a few days. As his indifference seems as great in this matter as in all others, I refer myself to your judgment whether it would not be well that you should use some warmth in order to bring to a prompt conclusion an affair which must evidently be the spring to set the whole machine in motion.'

The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, by restoring at least a temporary security to the court of Madrid, made it forgetful of the dangers it had run, and which might again occur. Concessions seemed now superfluous, and, instead of considering the States-General as saviours, it pretended that they wished to victimise it, and complained of being reduced by their intervention to submit to a peace which imposed upon Spain heavy sacrifices by robbing her of a part of her possessions. Castilian pride again gave free course to its incorrigible illusions. 'Neither the urgent letters addressed by the King of England and their High Mightinesses to the Queen-Regent,' writes De Witt to the ambassador of the States of Stockholm, 'nor the requests and entreaties of the ministers of the two powers, have had yet any success.' Spain, as Sir William Temple mournfully declared, was like a sick man who had neither the will nor the power to help himself, and who must be saved in his own despite.

Thus driven to extremities, and urged forward by the pressing instances of Sweden, the States-General, in order to force Spain to give way, refused to take upon themselves the guarantee of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle so long as her debt was not discharged. Spain could not dispense with this guarantee without exposing herself to a rupture of the peace with France. The urgent intervention of Baron Lisola, the Emperor's minister at the Hague, whose support De Witt and

Temple had contrived to gain, triumphed at last over the irresolutions of the Spanish Government. In an interview with the ambassador of the States at Madrid, Baron Reede van Renswonde, the Spanish Prime Minister, Count Pegnaranda, gave a solemn promise in the name of the Queen-Regent that the subsidies should be paid. 'The States-General,' he assured him, 'may feel as secure as if they had the money in their hands, and to this I pledge my faith, my honour, and my reputation.'

It was time that such protracted perversity should come to an end. The Swedish alliance had nearly been destroyed by it. The threatened danger was, however, averted by the departure from Stockholm of the French ambassador, the Marquis de Pomponne, and the arrival of the ambassador from the United Provinces. Provoked at the defection of Sweden, Louis XIV. had thought the recall of Pomponne required by his dignity. In the preceding month, Peter de Groot had been received in state at Stockholm, and the choice of so skilful a diplomatist enabled the States to confirm their wavering influence with the Swedish Government. With singular perspicacity De Groot pointed out the means to be employed to induce Sweden to have patience with the delays and irresolutions of Spain. 'The advantage,' he writes, 'should not be neglected which may be obtained from a judicious distribution of some sums of money, particularly in a country where everything is very dear and people are in the habit of spending more than they have got; where nothing is done for nothing, and where everyone sets private before public interests.' 'It is,' he adds, 'the shortest, least expensive, and safest way, since 20,000 rix-dollars in presents will do more than 100,000 florins in subsidies.' The Chancellor and Prime Minister, Magnus de la Gardie, was himself so pressed for money that he obtained an assignment on the subsidies promised to Sweden of a sum of 20,000 rix-dollars due to him, and requested payment in advance. 'There would be everything to gain,' writes the ambassador on another occasion, 'in giving a great satisfaction to the Queen-Regent, by making her a present of a little pleasure yacht.' 'The more I consider this government,' he

adds, 'the more I am confirmed in my opinion that the most important affairs are regulated here not so much by the interest of the public as by that of the principal ministers; and that the surest and least costly method of obtaining success here is to gain the rulers, since what is given to the public obliges no one in particular, and wins glory but no gratitude.'

While he thus urged, though vainly, upon the States to take advantage of the venality of the Swedish Government, De Groot never ceased to represent the increasingly pressing necessity for the prompt payment of the subsidies by Spain. He declared that Sweden could not dispense with them, and would be quite capable, if need were, of procuring them elsewhere, at the risk of destroying the work of the Triple Alliance. 'France,' he writes, 'is not sleeping, and is throwing out a bait to preserve the good-will of those who remain attached to her.' He urgently recommended them to 'strike the iron whilst it was hot.'

As soon as Spain had made up her mind to subsidise Sweden in order to obtain her assistance for the Netherlands, De Groot attempted to reduce the demands of the Swedish Government, and induced them to consent to take bills of exchange for the payment of the entire sums promised by the Spanish Government. The agreement was helped forward by the intervention of a new negotiator, M. Silverkroon, who was despatched to the Hague to concert measures with Appelboom, the envoy of the court of Stockholm. By his agency, after a series of conferences, Sweden was induced to content herself with 200,000 crowns down, and the remaining 280,000 were divided into two payments at intervals of eight months. In consideration of the promise to pay, given by the Queen-Regent of Spain, the act of guarantee of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed May 7, 1669, in the names of the King of England, of the King of Sweden, and of the States-General. Before being exchanged between the contracting parties, the two reciprocal engagements were to remain in the hands of Sir William Temple until the payment of the final instalment of the subsidies. Every precaution seemed to have been taken to deprive Spain of any loophole for evasion, and the States-

General might justly congratulate themselves on the completion of their diplomatic successes by the happy termination of their negotiations with Sweden.

They were not prepared for the final demands of the court of Madrid. Notwithstanding her engagements, Spain now declared that she would postpone all payments until a fresh convention had been submitted to her; that, namely, in which the allies were to define the measures intended to secure the execution of the act of guarantee of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. The project had been for some months in preparation at the instigation of the Grand Pensionary, and had given occasion to prolonged debates. De Witt had found himself opposed, not only by the irresolution of England—now disposed to act and again to temporise—but also by the resistance of Sweden, who feared to engage herself too openly against France. He had, however, at last convinced the allies of the republic that a military convention was necessary to enforce the execution of the treaty, and once again had obtained their consent. But there still remained to be settled the allocation of the subsidies demanded by Sweden. As the price of a military contingent to be placed at the disposal of Spain in the event of a renewal of the war, Sweden demanded the promise of a second sum of 180,000 crowns to be paid quarterly, and required that the payment should be guaranteed in advance, half by England and half by the States-General. The refusal of England to enter into this engagement had prolonged the negotiation.

Spain could not fail to be informed of this mischance, and thought that she was paying too high a price in the subsidy of 480,000 crowns already granted for the guarantee of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, so long as the convention which was to be attached to it was not finally settled. Not holding herself bound by her promise to pay, to which she had attached no condition, she refused to keep it until she had obtained the fresh satisfaction she demanded in order to place her in perfect security. In justification of this the ambassador of the Queen-Regent at the Hague, Don Estevan de Gamarra, appealed to the instructions that he had received

from the Governor of the Netherlands, the incapable and obstinate Constable of Castille.

Such a proceeding, so contrary to all rules of common honesty, created great scandal. The States-General and the English Government made fresh and vehement remonstrances. At the Hague, the Grand Pensionary de Witt, being called upon to speak at a conference in the name of the allies, said such very unpleasant things to Don Estevan de Gamarra, that the Spanish ambassador was quite confounded and had not a word to say in reply. Arlington on his side commissioned Godolphin, the English minister at Brussels, to express his displeasure; while Temple did not spare Gamarra or the Constable of Castille the sharpest reproaches and the most serious warnings. Meanwhile the States-General gave pressing instructions to their deputies, Vrybergen and Van der Tocht, whom they sent to the Governor of the Netherlands at Brussels. Their threats and remonstrances were in vain. Gamarra seemed disposed to receive them favourably, but the Constable entirely ignored them. 'His reply,' writes De Witt, 'shows us the futility of our hopes.' The rupture of the negotiations seemed inevitable. The Swedish president, Maréchal, quitted the Hague, not choosing to submit to the indignity of treating with a government which could no longer inspire confidence.

De Witt, not allowing himself to be disheartened, made a last effort to avert this extremity. 'Though he was never,' he said, 'for plastering upon an ill wall,' he would not be turned aside from the object he wished to attain. He undertook to persuade England and Sweden that, however unjustifiable might be the refusal of the Spanish Government to keep its word, nothing had been asked of the allies but what they were prepared to do. He finally obtained from Sweden an engagement to furnish a military contingent, without exacting any pledge on the subject of the war subsidies, but with freedom to keep her troops at home in case of non-payment. The last difficulties were thus smoothed away. The Constable of Castille declared that as soon as he should receive the original act of the treaty of mutual assistance concluded between the

allies, he would arrange for the payment of the first instalment of the sums due to Sweden; and he announced that the money would be paid into the Bank of Amsterdam.

On this assurance the convention known as the Act of Triple Concert was concluded at the Hague. The States-General and the King of England pledged themselves, in the event of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle being broken, to send to sea forty line-of-battle ships each, to which was to be added a force of 6,000 foot and 2,000 horse, which latter might be replaced by a double number of infantry. The States were to furnish their contingent within a fortnight of its being called for, and the King of England as soon as possible. The King of Sweden promised on his side to set on foot, at the latest within three months from the commencement of hostilities, an army corps of 16,000 men; with the reservation that he should be dispensed from this obligation in case he did not receive the contingent war subsidies, fixed at 180,000 crowns quarterly. The diplomatic engagements were thus completed and sanctioned by military guarantees.

The Constable of Castille, having thus obtained everything that he had professed to wish, could not, however, give up his habit of evasion, and tried to excite disputes which the English ambassador Temple speaks of as groundless quarrels. De Witt met them with unanswerable arguments, and represented to him 'that they would only serve to disgust an allied monarch from whom such great advantages might be expected, and to leave uncompleted the work of peace, the design of which had been inspired by God for the universal good of Christendom.' The States-General having refused to take any notice of these quibbles, Gamarra thought himself at last authorised to pay into the hands of the Swedish ambassador the 200,000 crowns the refusal of which had nearly been the rock on which the negotiations were shipwrecked. He added to them the bond signed by Spain for the payment of the 280,000 crowns still due, receiving in exchange copies of the Act of Guarantee of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle and of the Act of Triple Concert, which completed the measures taken for the security of Spain.

A last formality insisted upon by the court of Madrid remained to be accomplished: that of the ratification of the Act of Guarantee by the governments which had signed it. England delayed compliance, and finally consented with an unwillingness which could not escape the observation of the Grand Pensionary. France almost succeeded in preventing the Swedish Government from following suit with the other allied powers, and so destroying the work of diplomacy at the moment when it reached completion. In the month of April, Count Kœnigsmark, the former ambassador of Sweden in France, who had now entered the service of Louis XIV., arrived in hot haste at the Hague to endeavour to prevent the Act of Ratification being delivered to the States. At the same time Pomponne, the ambassador of France to the United Provinces, transmitted to Stockholm through the French resident, Rousseau, the proposals by which the King of France flattered himself that he should obtain a sudden change of front in the diplomacy of the Swedish regency. Informed of this, Count Kœnigsmark spared neither threats nor promises to Appelboom, the Swedish ambassador at the Hague, to induce him to await the arrival of the next courier before parting with the Act of Ratification. Appelboom, after long resistance, finally gave way and only looked for some pretext to justify his refusal. But the Grand Pensionary, having received notice from the envoy of the States at Stockholm that the Swedish regency had despatched the Ratification to the Hague, would not allow Appelboom to detain it, and insisted upon its delivery without delay. The minister of Sweden was reduced to telling Count Kœnigsmark, who threatened him with the resentment of France, 'that if he were to be ruined, he preferred that it should be by obeying his orders rather than by disobeying them.'

The attempt made by the French Government at the last hour had failed. At the beginning of the month of May 1670, copies of the Act of Ratification, signed by the governments interested, were delivered to each negotiator; and the anxiety constantly caused to the States by the persistence of Spain in her unreasonable demands seemed happily dissipated. Such

was the result of the long and arduous labours of the Triple Alliance. More than two years of negotiations had been needed to bring it to completion. A shorter time sufficed to dissolve it.

The States had urged Spain to fulfil her engagements, not only in order to obtain the co-operation of Sweden, but also to guard themselves against another danger with which they were threatened: the withdrawal of the court of Madrid from the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle as the result of an agreement with Louis XIV. for the annexation of the Netherlands to France. The internal divisions which were finally undermining the strength of Spain, and completing the exhaustion of her resources, gave the States cause to fear that she might consent to yield.

In fact, while the ancient monarchy of Charles V. was submitting to be despoiled by Louis XIV. revolutions in the palace were hastening the completion of its downfall. The Queen-Regent, Maria Anne of Austria, had provoked the discontent of the court and the nation by giving her political confidence to her confessor, Father Nithard, a German Jesuit who had been appointed Inquisitor-General and invested with the powers of Prime Minister. Don Juan, the natural son of Philip IV., endowed with the most brilliant qualities, had rallied around him the national party, by offering himself as a defender to Spain, which had only escaped from the hands of an old man to fall into those of a child under the guardianship of a woman. He had been appointed Governor of the Netherlands in 1667, but had refused to absent himself from Spain, that he might be on the spot to take advantage of the vacancy of the throne which would be afforded by the expected death of the young king, Charles II. Threatened with arrest, he advanced upon Madrid at the head of an escort of 300 horse to insist upon the banishment of Father Nithard, and was welcomed along his road by the acclamations of the populace. The Queen-Regent was forced to yield, but induced Don Juan to content himself, instead of taking possession of the government, with the vice-royalty of Aragon, which left him master of half Spain. These dissensions could

not fail to dispose the court of Madrid to an understanding with the King of France, rather than to resistance. Accordingly it had not shown itself indifferent to the proposals made by Louis XIV. on the subject of the exchange of the Netherlands, and had even encouraged him in such a course by cautious advances.

Louis spared no pains to carry through this negotiation, which might result in the most glorious diplomatic success of his reign. He was tempted by the hope of acquiring peaceably and at once an increase of territory which would make France the true sovereign of Europe. Could he procure by means of a treaty the provinces possession of which would extend the northern frontier of his kingdom, he would disarm all opposition and secure to himself by inoffensive means, as he himself said, 'the acquisition most desirable to him in all the world.' It was true that the secret treaty which he had lately concluded with the Emperor of Germany with a view to the division of the Spanish monarchy on the death of Charles II. secured the Netherlands to him; but he foresaw that the opposition of the other States might place obstacles in the way of the execution of this convention; and he was beginning to fear that the Spaniards might be determined in case of a vacancy of the throne to have neither a German nor a French prince, but to make choice of Don Juan, in order that the kingdom might not be dismembered. It was greatly to his interest, therefore, that he should be placed in possession of the Netherlands during the lifetime of the young King. In this hope, he instructed his ambassador at Madrid, Monseigneur de Bousy, Archbishop of Toulouse, who had succeeded the Marquis de Villars, to offer the court of Madrid, in exchange for the Netherlands, Roussillon and French Cerdagne 'besides any sum of money which could induce them to accept this territorial compensation.' These proposals he at the same time caused to be most strongly urged at the court of Vienna.

It seemed to be to the interest of the Spanish Government to receive them favourably, for the Netherlands might be considered as the diseased limb which must be cut away from

the rest of the body. The French conquests by destroying the integrity of the Netherlands had made their possession so precarious, that it was henceforth not merely useless but burdensome to Spain. They had already cost her more than 4,000,000*l.* in the preceding reign. She maintained in the Low Countries at great cost an army which exhausted her finances, but was insufficient to repel a fresh invasion. By persisting in retaining these provinces Spain was provoking the rivalry of France; and, to secure them against the conquest she had reason to fear, it was necessary to place herself in dependence upon England and the States-General. She might, therefore, be tempted to yield them up, and by choosing as Governor of the Netherlands Don Inigo de Velasco, Constable of Castille, who took pleasure in parading the most frivolous incapacity, the Queen-Regent showed apparently little concern for their preservation. Besides, by ceding to Louis that part of the provinces which the King of France had overrun, and which might have been preserved by the abandonment of Franche-Comté, the court of Madrid had commenced their dismemberment and proved its indifference to their fate. The refusal given to the demand of the States-General, that negotiations should be entered into with Louis for the recovery of the Netherlands in exchange for Franche-Comté, could not fail to confirm the suspicions aroused as to these projects for an understanding.

The offers of the French Government had not remained unknown to De Witt, and he had shown himself justly alarmed. The cession of the Netherlands to Louis XIV. would have rendered nugatory the precautions so painfully taken by the States-General to save themselves from the proximity of France. They would lose thereby all the benefits of the Triple Alliance, and would remain exposed to the resentment of the all-powerful monarch whom they had affronted. Happily for them, the indecision of the court of Spain came to their aid. The Queen-Regent was checked by her respect for the will of Philip IV. which enjoined the retention of the Netherlands. None of her ministers had either authority or courage to take upon themselves during a regency the responsibility of

the cession. Public opinion was against it, because the Netherlands were the connecting link between Spain and the north of Europe, and prevented her from being cut off from the great continental interests. There was a sort of national tradition of the close union between the towns of Flanders and the Spanish monarchy. Still the tergiversations of the court of Madrid none the less threatened the United Provinces with an agreement with France that would have been fatal to their independence. To prevent this, De Witt had urged the States-General to leave Spain no peace—even at the risk of driving her to extremities by their demands—until she had granted to Sweden the pecuniary satisfaction she had so long evaded. By obtaining payment from Spain herself of the subsidies intended for the defence of her possessions, they made it to her interest to profit by the expenditure required for their preservation, and deprived her thenceforth of all temptation to give them up.

At the very moment when the States flattered themselves that they had no more to fear for the Netherlands, they were placed in a position where they had everything to fear for themselves, in being called upon at once to act on the defensive against both England and France. Hardly had the Triple Alliance received the definitive adhesion of Sweden, before England prepared to break away from it. 'M. de Witt will soon discover,' writes Lionne to Pomponne, 'that the States are not so entirely masters of the wills of their new allies as they had imagined.'

Notwithstanding the manifestations of public opinion in favour of the policy of alliance with the United Provinces and resistance to France, Charles II. was impatient to gratify his resentment against the republic, which he had appeared to renounce when he joined with the States-General to prevent the conquest of the Netherlands by Louis XIV. But it was not merely for the interest of England that he had entered into the Triple Alliance, it was more especially for the purpose of detaching the United Provinces from France. He had allied himself to the republic only to isolate her.

This policy had not escaped the perspicacity of the French

diplomats. The Marquis de Pomponne at the Hague remarked upon the conduct of England as 'the effect of prudence which looked forward into futurity,' and he clearly perceived the object she proposed to herself by detaching the States-General from the interests of the King of France 'in order to profit by the forlorn condition to which they would be reduced, to impose upon them eventually a yoke which they would not have strength to shake off.' During the negotiations of the Congress of Breda, when Charles II. was treating for peace with the United Provinces, one of his ambassadors, Lord Hollis, had had occasion to converse with a French exile, Gourville, who, having been forced to leave France after the condemnation of Fouquet, and being desirous to be restored to favour with Louis XIV., had been entrusted by Lionne with a secret mission to the Princes of Brunswick-Luneburg. Lord Hollis had asked him to point out 'what measures should be taken to ruin an enemy so dangerous to the King of England as was the Grand Pensionary of Holland.' Gourville, who was dissatisfied with the reception given him by De Witt when he had been presented to him by Count d'Estrades, and had kept a grudge against him in consequence, replied to the English ambassador 'that Charles II. ought to appear to forget all that had passed, and feign to desire to form a close union for the interests of both countries. Once persuaded that the King of England was disposed to check the ambition of Louis XIV., the Grand Pensionary,' continued Gourville, 'would not fail to consider that it would be a great feather in his cap if, after having imposed conditions of peace upon England, he could lay down the law to France, an offence which the King of France would never pardon, and the King of England would thus be certain to lead him infallibly to his ruin.' Charles II. eagerly welcomed this perfidious counsel, which is mentioned by a contemporary historian, Wicquefort, and of which Gourville boasts in his Memoirs. He encouraged the republic to ally herself with England in order to oppose the French invasion of the Netherlands, and hardly had he launched her on this course than he began to treat for a reconciliation with France. 'Sir Thomas Clifford said to a

friend of mine in confidence,' writes Temple to his father, 'upon all the joy that was here at the conclusion of the Triple Alliance: "Well, for all this noise, we must yet have another war with the Dutch before it be long."'

The inclinations of Charles II. combined with his animosity towards the States-General to attach him to the French policy. Impatient of all control and ambitious of exercising absolute power, he hoped to find in an alliance with the King of France protection against his parliament, which he found too independent and too parsimonious. Having never sufficient money to satisfy his expensive tastes and love of pleasure, he was interested in obtaining pecuniary assistance from his new ally, and when he engaged in the service of Louis XIV. he was quite prepared to receive his pay.

He was urged forward in this course by his brother the Duke of York, who had renounced Protestantism, and considered the King of France as the protector of the Catholic religion. His principal councillors favoured this secret understanding. They were those who gained the surname of the Cabal, of which the initial letters of their names spelt the word: namely, Clifford, Ashley, Buckingham, Arlington, and Lauderdale. Most of them were corrupted by their ostentatious contempt and ridicule of all virtue and all truth; and they eagerly sought the alliance of France, not only to satisfy their hatred of a republic, but also in the hope of sharing in the largesses which Louis XIV. held before their eyes. By appearing favourable to the French policy they were sure of paying their court to good purpose to Charles II., whose secret sympathies they thus flattered and served.

Since the disgrace of the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, the Duke of Buckingham held the first place in the circle of favourites. He had been the companion of the King's dangers during his exile and of his pleasures since his return, and joined to the lustre of a great name the advantages of fortune and talent, but he was frivolous and intriguing. He had made himself the head of the Court party, and aspired to the direction of the government, although his only official title was Master of the Horse. He had established relations with the court of

Louis XIV., and kept up a constant correspondence with Charles's sister Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, for whom he felt or affected a devoted attachment. Next to him came the Earl of Lauderdale, Secretary of State for Scotland, who bore the honorary title of Prime Minister, who expressed no will but that of the King, and encouraged him in all measures which could free him from the tutelage of parliament. The two Commissioners of the Treasury, Sir Thomas Clifford and Lord Ashley, showed most zeal in advising and precipitating the rupture with the United Provinces. Clifford, Keeper of the Privy Purse, whose impetuous eloquence had made his fortune, and who was always ready to take any bold step, was noted for the hatred he bore towards them. Lord Ashley, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who as Earl of Shaftesbury afterwards played so conspicuous a part, had passed from the ranks of the republican party into those of the Royalists. To great and persuasive powers of speech he added a genius for intrigue which was checked by no obstacle and embarrassed by no scruple; his political programme was war with the States-General. Arlington, who held the office of Secretary of State, and fulfilled the functions of foreign minister, was the only man in the Council who might have made himself the defender of the United Provinces. He could easily have won to his side Bridgman, the Keeper of the Seals; Secretary Trevor; and the Duke of Ormonde, Viceroy of Ireland, who was kept in the background by the Court faction. Arlington had married a daughter of the Dutch ambassador, Beverwaert, and had continued until now faithful to the traditional English policy, of defending the balance of power in Europe. But although by nature honest, he had not sufficient strength of character to remain constant to his opinions and, if necessary, to give up office for them. Neglected by the States-General, who had not sufficiently acknowledged his services, bought by the French ambassador, and fearing above all things to expose himself to the hostility of the party which enjoyed the royal favour, he was soon to abandon the line of conduct he had hitherto pursued, and to employ himself in the destruction of the Triple Alliance which he himself had concluded.

The King of England, however, was interested in not hurrying on matters, and thought himself obliged to show some consideration for the United Provinces. Fearing that they might effect a reconciliation with the King of France if he allowed them to suspect his designs, he continued towards them his familiar policy of duplicity. To foster their illusions he gave Temple the title of Resident Ambassador at the Hague, and deceived him as to his policy in order to make more sure that Temple would assist him in deceiving the States-General. No choice could have offered better security for the apparent union of England and the United Provinces. Accordingly Arlington, whom Charles had not yet taken into his confidence, wrote in all sincerity to the Grand Pensionary: 'Amongst all the good qualities of Sir William Temple, there is none which has more strongly commended him to his Majesty for employment as ambassador to the States, than the good fortune he has had of pleasing you; and if he has the same fortune of again succeeding in this, his Majesty doubts not that matters will soon be settled to the complete satisfaction of the two nations.'

On his side Temple thus announced his mission to De Witt: 'I venture to add thus much from myself, that if his Majesty did not design to cultivate our alliance with the same sincerity and good-will with which the seed was sown, he would make use of some other person than myself for this commission, of which I will give you proof by that frank and open course of action which I have always professed.' The English ambassador took advantage of his audience of reception to renew his protestations of good-will. In his frequent interviews with the Grand Pensionary also he took pains to disarm his suspicions, but yet owned 'that if there should ever be on the throne of England a prince who was insincere, or a feeble and corrupt ministry,' he could not answer for the measures which might be taken.

De Witt did not fail to respond warmly to these assurances. Forced to resist France, notwithstanding his desire to conciliate her, he had recognised, he said, 'the necessity of using England as the buckler of the republic.' He represented to

Temple 'that the States had sucked that in like milk, which was already passed into the very flesh and substance of their body.' But his confidence in the loyalty of the English Government was not free from anxiety, and his apprehensions were soon aroused. Nine months after the return of Temple to the Hague, De Witt came to see him to communicate to him, 'as a friend and not as First Minister,' his recent interview with Puffendorf, the Swedish agent in France, who had passed through the Hague on his return to Stockholm. 'The French ministers,' he said to Temple, 'feeling sure that the Swedish Government would profit by their communications, had informed Puffendorf that England had abandoned the determination to which she had arrived in concert with the States-General and Sweden, although she did not think it expedient to mention this at present.' Puffendorf not having put much faith in these confidences, and being disposed to consider them as a subterfuge employed to detach Sweden from the Triple Alliance, Turenne had shown him a letter from the French ambassador in London, Colbert de Croissy, which related the success of his negotiations, adding, 'that he had given the ministers of the King of England to understand the full extent of the liberalities of the King of France.' Temple omitted nothing that might persuade De Witt that Colbert de Croissy was boasting to Louis XIV. of a service which he had never performed, and made it a point of honour to convince him 'of his ignorance of any mystery, if any there were.' The Grand Pensionary could not forbear a smile, but would not appear to attach undue importance to a private conversation. He contented himself with remarking that certain foreign ambassadors, when they declared that England had enjoyed nine months of a great ministry, seemed thereby to insinuate that a new policy was about to prevail in the counsels of the English Government. He added that when he entered upon public life he had been very suspicious, but that he had so often suspected wrongly, that he had cured himself of that disposition. De Witt ended by promising Temple that he would not cease to consider the alliance of the two countries as the best pledge for their common safety; and assured him

that the States would continue so to act until the King of England and his ministers had informed them that they had taken other measures. He rose as he said these words, as if expecting no answer. In sending a faithful report of this conversation to the Keeper of the Seals, Temple, who was beginning to mistrust his own government, added slyly, 'that he had not been very desirous to draw their discourse into more length.'

The English Government indeed took no pains to conform its conduct to the declaration of its ambassador. It sought only to arouse disputes which might prepare the way for a rupture. The question of saluting the flag gave rise to demands which were beginning to disturb the good relations between the two countries. The King of England wished to oblige the Dutch vessels to dip their ensign to the English ships without the latter being obliged to return the salute. 'He desired thus to be acknowledged as king of the ocean,' wrote De Witt to D'Estrades. The Treaty of Breda had left this question in suspense. De Witt, unable to obtain the assistance of France in opposing the King of England's pretensions to maritime supremacy, endeavoured to find a compromise by allowing the Dutch ships to dip their ensign to the English, but on condition that the latter should return the salute. He promised Temple to use his influence to obtain the consent of the States. Temple received the proposal favourably, and in his official correspondence pointed out its advantages. But the English Government, desiring to retain a pretext for declaring war, delayed the settlement of the question.

Differences 'which seemed rather to concern shopkeepers than ministers of State,' as De Witt told Temple, embittered the controversy. The maritime treaty which De Witt had obtained in addition to the Triple Alliance had not availed to prevent all occasions of commercial rivalry, and these were not long in recurring. The East India Company had always aspired to reserve to the inhabitants of the United Provinces the monopoly of trade in the countries with which it trafficked; and in order to secure this, it had forced the distant princes with

whom it traded to close the access to their States to foreign nations, who thus found themselves excluded both from the Dutch colonies and from all the territory of the Indies. The first negotiations entered into aimed at a return to a system of freedom by which both countries would have equally profited. Temple represented to De Witt that it could be no disadvantage to the United Provinces to consent, as their superiority in trade left no possibility of dangerous rivalry with England, 'and weapons wielded by more skilful hands might with impunity be equalised.' De Witt accordingly showed himself ready to receive any proposals for conciliation, but these the English Government perpetually evaded.

A fresh dispute, of which the injustice was no less evident, gave further proof to the States-General of England's disposition to seek a quarrel with them. It concerned the possession of the island of Surinam, which had been conceded to the United Provinces by the treaty of Breda. Before evacuating it, the English governor, Lord Willoughby, had attempted, in order to ruin its trade, to expel from the colony not merely all English subjects, but also the slaves belonging to them who were employed in the manufacture of sugar. To put an end to the cause of dispute, the States of Holland, led by De Witt, might have been disposed to give up the island in return for a pecuniary compensation. But the States of Zeeland, for whose profit it had been conquered by their own squadron, refused to yield possession. Firmly resolved, however, to indemnify England, the Grand Pensionary succeeded in bringing about an agreement intended to satisfy her, and thus gave a new pledge of the policy of moderation which he never ceased to practise. In the hope of putting an end to these discords, and of drawing closer the bonds of alliance which were beginning to slacken, the States-General sent Van Beuningen to London as ambassador extraordinary. He was the more likely to be well received by Charles II. as he had already been in frequent communication with the English ambassador in Paris, while preparing and concluding the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle between France and Spain. The favourable dispositions which he had begun to manifest

towards the young Prince of Orange seemed besides to insure him the favour of the King of England. Finally, the acquaintance he had gained with French politics enabled him to watch over the negotiations set on foot by Louis XIV. with Charles II., and to throw light upon the suspicions that were beginning to be awakened in the Grand Pensionary's mind. 'No man,' writes a contemporary, 'seemed to him so fit to revive in London an ardour which it was so important not to allow to be extinguished.' Knowing this, Louis XIV. desired his ambassador, the Marquis de Croissy, to be beforehand with him 'to hinder this great braggart from making an impression on the minds of the King of England's councillors.' But no skill of the Dutch ambassador could affect resolutions already irrevocably formed. 'If he comes to outwit us—I mean, to lead us out of our own measures into some of his—,' writes Arlington to Temple, 'he may be deceived.'

Van Beuningen, besides, stultified his embassy by allowing himself to be duped, and thus damaged his diplomatic reputation to the detriment of his employers. He made them the victims of his self-confidence, which was such that, in his first embassy—to Sweden—having accompanied Queen Christina on a hunting party, he tried to pass himself off as an accomplished horseman at the great risk of being thrown. Before his departure from the Hague, Van Beuningen had received, through the Grand Pensionary, most satisfactory letters from the resident minister of the United Provinces in England, John Boreel, lord of Westhoven, 'appointed,' says Wicquefort, 'on the nomination of the States of Zeeland, although his intelligence was small and his judgment poor.' Boreel had not profited by his embassy to obtain any enlightenment as to the dispositions of the King and his ministers. His credulity could not fail to influence Van Beuningen, who was the more ready to share it that his intercourse with the ministers of Charles II. inspired him with complete confidence. As soon as he arrived in London he was placed in communication with the Keeper of the Seals and Secretary Trevor, who had been kept in ignorance of the negotiations commenced between Charles and Louis. The sincerity with which both

renewed to him the most favourable declarations as to the Triple Alliance completed his deception.

The check that he met with at the outset of his negotiations did not suffice to enlighten him. Instructed to obtain the consent of Charles II. to the admission of the Emperor into the Triple Alliance, he could gain no hearing for his proposals. The King of England had, in fact, bound himself by his engagements with France to refuse his consent, and to satisfy Louis XIV. he appointed to the conferences held with Van Beuningen those of his councillors who were noted for their hostility to the republic—Clifford and Ashley. According to the declarations made by the English commissioners to the ambassador of the States, the offers of the court of Vienna were to be rejected on the flimsy pretext that the Emperor was only proposing a defensive league in order to draw his allies into a guarantee of his territories against the Turkish invasion. Meanwhile, wishing to avoid all explanation, Charles II. was careful to keep at a distance the envoy of the court of Vienna, Baron Lisola; and to prevent his coming to London let him know 'that he could pay no attention to the Emperor's request.' The embassy from which the States-General had promised themselves such a happy issue thus disappointed their expectation.

The last hopes remaining to them of preserving the alliance of England could only be justified by the presence at the Hague of Sir William Temple. But he was beginning to foresee his recall. 'I will beg of you not to be swayed,' he wrote to Arlington, 'by considerations of kindness to me, in a matter of public concernment . . . for while the King's business goes well it is not two straws' matter whether such a body as I have any share in it or no.' To avert his threatened disgrace, he affected sometimes to be captious and touchy towards the government of the United Provinces. One of his secretaries having been summoned before the court of Holland, he haughtily asserted his ambassadorial privileges, and ventured to write as follows to the procurator of the court: 'I think it well to tell you that I consider as an impertinence the act that you have just committed against a

member of my suite, apparently desiring to treat me like one of your own shopkeepers.' But in acting thus he did violence to his own feelings, and whenever he thought himself at liberty to follow his personal inclinations, far from provoking disputes, he employed himself only in preventing or pacifying them.

Two demands for the extradition of English republican refugees in the United Provinces had been addressed to him. One was for the delivering up of three Presbyterian ministers. He evaded it by replying that it had been impossible to discover them, and that the decree of the States ordering their expulsion must be accepted as sufficient. The other required the arrest of a former officer in Cromwell's army, Cornet George Joyce, now living at Rotterdam, who in 1647 had conducted King Charles I. as a prisoner to Hampton Court. Forced to obey the instructions he had received, and unable to address himself to the States of Holland, who were not sitting at the time, Temple communicated with the councillor-deputies, who despatched two of their number, Cornelius de Witt and Voorbruck, to the magistrates of Rotterdam. The latter refused to permit a breach of the laws of hospitality, and when after long debate they consented to make an order for the arrest of Joyce to enable Temple to examine him, the refugee had had time to escape. In his report to Secretary Trevor of the failure of this negotiation, Temple was careful to set the conduct of the Grand Pensionary free from all blame, and made a point of doing justice to the explanations which De Witt had hastened to offer in his correspondence with Van Beuningen. He represented that the miscarriage of his demand must be imputed to the constitution of the republic, 'which not only permits of no action without the consent of the province interested, but also allows independent jurisdiction to each town in each province,' and thus offered almost insurmountable obstacles to the satisfaction that he had been commissioned to obtain. Such considerations were too much opposed to the designs of Charles II. for him not to be anxious to rid himself, without further delay, of an ambassador who was disposed to avoid all pretexts for a rupture instead of seeking and finding them.

While the United Provinces were thus abandoned by their new ally, whose only intention now was to betray them, the King of France, against whom they thought they had secured the support of England, was menacing them with his anger. Arrested in his conquest of the Netherlands by the intervention of the States-General, Louis XIV. could not forgive them for having brought against him a league 'which baffled all his measures.' He had prudently paused before this barrier which set bounds to his ambition until he was strong enough to overthrow it; but, as he himself wrote,¹ 'he felt himself stung to the quick, and was determined to be revenged.' After being victorious over Spain, and inducing the Emperor of Germany to share in his projects of division of the Spanish monarchy, he could not pardon the United Provinces for undertaking to defend the balance of power in Europe against his ambition, and he promised himself to make them repent the foresight of the great minister who had foiled his plans. He declared afterwards 'that since the peace he had never entered his council without remembering the ingratitude of a State which owed its enfranchisement and its power to the protection of the Kings of France.' His desire for vengeance was so open that the day after peace had been signed with Spain, the Spanish ambassador had not feared to say, 'It will soon be the turn of the United Provinces.' From Paris, as well as from Berlin, Stockholm, and Venice, the envoys and secret agents of the States-General sent home advices which foretold an imminent rupture.

The principal advisers of Louis XIV. shared his animosity towards the United Provinces. Marshal Villeroi was the only one who declared himself in favour of the States-General, faithful to the traditional policy of France, 'who could not fail,' he said, 'to lose an arm by a war with her old allies.' But Louvois, Colbert, and Lionne pronounced strongly against the republic. Louvois, who had been associated with his father Letellier in his office of Secretary of State for War, had made preparations for a new campaign to complete the

¹ Unpublished memoir of Louis XIV. on the war of 1672. Rousset, *Histoire de Louvois*, vol. i. p. 519.

conquest of the Netherlands, and could not be consoled for the conclusion of peace. 'I have had to bring my mind,' he writes, 'to contemplate the occurrence of the thing in all the world I least desired.' Colbert might have been expected to advise a pacific policy in the interest of the finances, but he allowed himself to be tempted by the hope of destroying the commerce of the United Provinces for the benefit of France. Lionne, humiliated at having only heard of the Triple Alliance when it was already concluded, was impatient for reparation. 'I may say beforehand,' he declared, 'that I do not think the King is inclined to let his hair be rubbed up the wrong way by anyone.' 'It is not for traders who are themselves usurpers,' he adds in another letter, 'to decide as sovereigns upon the interests of the two greatest monarchs of Christendom.' He was anxious for their punishment, and only postponed it to give it greater effect. 'Let us be content to appear to be the anvil,' he writes, 'and do all in our power to become the hammer.'

Public opinion, so far as it could obtain expression under an absolute monarchy, encouraged this feeling of irritation. The country had resented as an affront the obstacle placed by the mediation of the States-General in the way of the aggrandisement of France. 'We are turning our anger against the Dutch, who must be held henceforward as our most redoubtable enemies,' writes one of Lionne's correspondents to him from Paris, 'and from all that is said here, I adjure you both for your own reputation and for the public satisfaction to omit nothing in your policy that may give you the means of overthrowing this new power that has arisen.'

The danger of this hostility had been pointed out to De Witt long before by D'Estrades. As far back as the year 1663, so soon as the opposition of the States-General to the designs of Louis XIV. had shown itself, he had represented to the Grand Pensionary 'of what resentment the King of France might be capable, if after the defection of which they had already been guilty in the peace of Münster the States should again depart from an alliance to which they had just pledged themselves in a recent treaty.' Van Beuningen's report of his

mission, and the departure of Count d'Estrades, could hardly leave the States-General any further doubt as to the conduct which the King of France proposed to observe towards them in future. On his return to the Hague, Van Beuningen acquainted his employers with the hostile and menacing attitude of Louis XIV. He informed the States-General of the measures which were to be taken against their commerce, advising them to answer by reprisals; and took the opportunity of these alarming communications to suggest to them 'that they should address themselves to the different European courts, point out to them the dangers of French domination, and represent the necessity of securing themselves by mutual assistance from subjection to the same yoke.'

Louis XIV. was not long in justifying these apprehensions, by recalling from the Hague Count d'Estrades, who had represented him there for six years. The Grand Pensionary, who had been on the most intimate footing with him, desired his continuance in office: 'believing him to be better disposed towards the States than those from whom he received his orders.' Although their friendship had been cooled by the invasion of the Netherlands and the conclusion of the Triple Alliance, he foresaw that his departure would increase the difficulties of any attempt at reconciliation. But his recall had become inevitable. Mistrusted by Louis XIV. for his leaning towards the republic, D'Estrades could no longer avert disgrace, since he had allowed himself to be duped by John de Witt's diplomatic skill, and had remained in ignorance of the negotiations entered into by the States-General with England and Sweden. Recognising for himself the impossibility of remaining at his post, he asked leave to retire, alleging the necessity of putting his affairs in order. As soon, therefore, as the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was concluded, Louis XIV. summoned him to render an account of his embassy, being at the same time quite resolved not to continue him in it. He showed his displeasure by refusing him the dignity of Marshal of France, for which Count d'Estrades had petitioned as one of the oldest generals in the kingdom, and when he sent him back to the Hague it was only to request an audience to take leave.

D'Estrades had to be satisfied with the regrets of the States as his sole recompense.

To conceal from them his projects for a speedy rupture, Louis, after a few months' delay, replaced him, in February 1669, by the Marquis de Pomponne, nephew of the great Arnaud, whose services he had appreciated in his embassies to Sweden. 'He was,' says Wicquefort, 'an honest man and an able minister, whose natural disposition was towards the preservation of the peace of Christendom; but he had no motive for attaching himself to a nation with which he was as yet unacquainted.' The instructions given him by Louis XIV. enjoined upon him the greatest circumspection, and the encouragement of any proposals that might restore confidence to the States by leaving them the hope of a reconciliation. But he was required at the same time to favour the internal divisions of the republic, by showing marked attentions to the Prince of Orange. 'My commission was the more difficult,' writes Pomponne in his *Mémoires*, 'that my business was to reassure sagacious and suspicious people by amusing them with words and speeches, and to delude them by ostensible negotiations without entering into any in reality.'

On his arrival at the Hague, the ambassador of France hastened to place himself in communication with the Grand Pensionary. Lionne had taken care to secure him a favourable reception by letting De Witt know 'how delighted Pomponne would be to have an opportunity of appreciating his extraordinary merits.' In order more surely to gain his confidence, Pomponne, knowing how greatly the Grand Pensionary mistrusted all those artifices of skill and cunning which made most of the mystery of diplomacy, met him, or rather affected to meet him, with a frankness that might disarm all suspicion. He conformed himself to the instructions given him, by allowing De Witt to imagine that the former agreement might be restored if the States-General would lend themselves to a fresh departure in policy; and gave him to understand that the King of France desired to have no negotiations with anyone but him, so high was the esteem in which he held him.

The Grand Pensionary was disposed to accept these advances, without, however, being thrown off his guard. It was rather from necessity than from inclination that he had had recourse to the co-operation of England; he had sought it only to secure the United Provinces against the proximity of France, but had not concealed from himself how precarious this alliance might be, in consequence of the resentment of Charles II. towards the republic. His solicitude, too, for the preservation of the republican government, made him desirous that union with England should not be indispensable to the States-General. The Orange party was strengthening as the Prince of Orange grew up, and some of the deputies of the States of Holland, jealous of the authority of John de Witt, seemed disposed to break away from the dominant party. The Grand Pensionary was, therefore, interested in not letting the republic become dependent upon the King of England, the uncle of the young Prince. He had accordingly taken pains to avoid giving any cause of complaint to France, in order to preserve the chance of reconciliation. Spain having requested to be admitted to the Triple Alliance, he caused her proposal to be rejected, in spite of Temple's urgent advice. 'I have never desired,' he said, 'to transform a treaty for the maintenance of peace into a league which might be considered by France as a provocation.' He hoped that the French Government would appreciate this discretion on the part of the republic, with which indeed Lionne appeared to be satisfied.

From the moment of the arrival of the Marquis de Pomponne, De Witt was careful to show still more plainly how much he was in favour of a policy of reconciliation. In his first interview with the new ambassador, after acknowledging all the services rendered by France to the republic, he expressed his regret that the invasion of the Netherlands should have troubled the harmony of the two States; but he urged, on the other hand, that the restoration of peace ought to secure their friendship from further prejudice. He attempted to convince the French ambassador that the allies had, in acceding to the request of Spain to become sureties for the

peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, only exercised the right recognised by Louis XIV. in one of the articles of the treaty, and he pledged himself to obtain from the States a similar guarantee towards France; and in his anxiety to interest Louis in an alliance with the republic, he expressed a warm desire for a mutual understanding in the event of the death of the King of Spain.

Van Beuningen, who had been accused by Louis of wishing to head a party hostile to France, conformed his conduct to the declarations of the Grand Pensionary. The enemies of the republic at the court of Versailles had given credit to the report that Van Beuningen had caused to be struck and put in circulation at the time of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, a medal, in which he was represented in the person of Joshua arresting the sun in his course, with these words engraved upon it: *Sta, sol.* It appeared intended as a reply directly attacking the medal in which Louis XIV. had taken the sun as his emblem, with this device: *Nullius impar.*

As soon as Van Beuningen was informed of the enmity he had thus incurred, he called upon the French ambassador for the purpose of most warmly denying an accusation which seemed, as he wrote afterwards, 'to have been invented merely as a joke against him.' He assured the Marquis de Pomponne 'that, far from having had any hand in such folly, there was no man either in France or in this country who could say that he had ever heard him speak otherwise than with the highest respect of the conduct of the King of France in the last peace.' Lionne replied to this disavowal by declaring 'that it had given great pleasure to the King, as Van Beuningen had appeared to him so able a man that he never should have thought him capable of having committed so great and so rash a folly.' It continued none the less to be imputed to him.

The reception given by the States to the Marquis de Pomponne, was a conclusive proof how much the republic was disposed to re-establish good relations with France. He delayed for three months his first audience in order to have his whole suite collected for his state entry into the Hague. The

deputies of the States met him in their carriages outside the town, and alighted to offer him an address. Having responded to this, he was invited to seat himself in a coach drawn by six horses, in which two deputies occupied the front seat, while at the doors were the four colonels of the French regiments in the service of the republic. The coach, preceded by the ambassador's equerry and four pages on horseback, was followed by the four gentlemen of his household also on horseback, behind whom walked his twelve footmen. Three other carriages magnificently caparisoned and filled with French officers completed the procession. 'I met with a great crowd when I entered the town,' he writes in his account of the ceremony, 'and I may say that the streets were filled with the populace, while ladies and people of quality were at all the windows.' He adds complacently that 'no ambassador to this country had ever made a finer entry.'

De Witt hoped that this courtesy and these demonstrations would assist the negotiations which, without prejudice to the Triple Alliance, might guarantee the republic against the enmity of France. To bring them to a conclusion, the Grand Pensionary proposed to Louis XIV. an agreement on the subject of the Netherlands, to depend upon the death of the King of Spain. No engagement had been entered into by the allies in prevision of such an event. The conventions of the Triple Alliance only stipulated the preservation of the Netherlands to the young King of Spain during his lifetime, and, as his feeble health was constantly suggesting a vacancy on the throne, the guarantee desired by the States-General remained very precarious, and was of use to them only to gain time. It was an object to them consequently to endeavour to prevent by a mutual agreement the final transformation of the Netherlands into a French province, in the eventual dismemberment of the Spanish monarchy.

The division of the Netherlands between France and the republic would not remedy the danger which might result from the proximity of their frontiers, and could not fail to awaken the pretensions of England. De Witt accordingly never lost sight of the scheme for the erection of the Netherlands into

an independent state. This was the project which in his remarkable political foresight he had always considered most favourable to the interests of the United Provinces. He did not despair of persuading Louis XIV. to reconsider it, by fresh negotiations which would at least enable him to discover the designs of the King of France, and to make them known to Europe. According to the plan submitted by De Witt to Pomponne, Louis XIV. was to retain the new possessions he had conquered from Spain, only restoring the most advanced posts of which he had made himself master and receiving in return Cambrai, Aire, and Saint Omer—'those doors which have always been open for the invasion of his kingdom, and which would now be closed.' The United Provinces, on the other hand, were to give up any idea of enlarging their frontier by fresh acquisitions, and to leave to the new republic the integrity of her dominions.

Louis XIV. might thus, by abandoning his pretensions to that part of the Spanish Netherlands which he had not yet conquered, have obtained peaceably on the death of the King of Spain an exchange most advantageous to his own kingdom. For the vicinity of the House of Austria in the Netherlands, which had so long been inconvenient and even dangerous to France, he would have substituted that of a little republic, placed under his protection and necessarily dependent upon him. By leaving to the United Provinces the safeguard of a barrier between their frontier and that of France, he might have rendered indissoluble the alliance with the States-General, which had been the traditional policy of France. He would thus have secured at once the safety of his own dominions and the peace of Europe, and would have placed himself beyond the reach of those coalitions which were so grievously to harass the last years of his reign. But, believing himself to be secure of the future by the treaty for the division of the Spanish monarchy which he had obtained from the Emperor of Germany, Louis XIV. preferred his revenge to his interests, and subordinated his policy to his resentment against the United Provinces. If he had allowed his ambassador to continue to discuss preliminaries with John

de Witt, it was only in order to detach the States-General from the Triple Alliance and to deprive them of the support of their allies. The Grand Pensionary perceived the trap, and was too wary to fall into it. 'He is too skilful,' wrote Pomponne, 'to give me an opening to take any such advantage.' His honesty as well as his prudence prevented his being the dupe of such perfidy, and the States-General, steadily following his advice, continued faithful to their diplomatic engagements. Temple, wishing to reassure the English court against all suspicion of defection, testified to their loyalty in these words: 'As to craft and duplicity, I do not think their taste or their disposition are inclined that way. For my own part, I shall continue to regard them as honest traders of good repute, which they will endeavour to preserve by straightforward conduct.'

Not only did De Witt absolutely refuse to prejudice the Triple Alliance by a secret agreement with France, not choosing to dispose of the Netherlands before the death of the King of Spain, but he insisted that in the event of the succession to the Spanish monarchy becoming open, the negotiations concerning the fate of the Low Countries should be carried on in concert with England and Sweden. Foiled in his expectation, Louis XIV. had no further interest in prolonging the negotiations. Unable to obtain from the States-General any engagement in contravention of the Triple Alliance, he determined to leave them henceforward no hope of an understanding, and he wrote to his ambassador: 'I will not endure that Monsieur de Witt, with all his skill, should pretend to engage me in any negotiations, after I have declared to him through yourself that they must be adjourned to some other time.'

Not content with opposing so peremptory a refusal to the conciliatory offers made by the Grand Pensionary, Louis replied to them by manifest tokens of ill-will. The pretensions and proceedings of the French Government in the Netherlands having aroused the just susceptibilities of Spain, the States-General, through the medium of the Grand Pensionary, had offered remonstrances to the French ambassador, both in their

own name and in those of the ministers of England and Sweden. Louis refused any explanation, and then, thinking it necessary to reassure Europe as to his pacific intentions, made choice of England and Sweden, to the exclusion of the United Provinces, as arbitrators in his differences with the Spanish Government. De Witt with his usual prudence took no notice of the affront offered to the republic. He even declared to the Marquis de Pomponne 'that he was obliged to the King of France for sparing his employers the pain of disobliging one or both parties by the judgment they would have had to deliver.' Notwithstanding this ill-disguised provocation on the part of the King of France, which De Witt termed a discourteous proceeding, the Grand Pensionary occupied himself solely in persuading the court of Madrid to accept this mediation, from which they seemed disposed to hold aloof if the States-General were excluded. After prolonged discussions he finally induced it to submit to the arbitration of England and Sweden. His whole policy was subordinated to the preservation of peace.

Still continuing their part of mediators, the States-General offered to France their guarantee of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle which had been given to Spain by the powers signing the Triple Alliance. Louis XIV. had demanded this guarantee of the Grand Pensionary through Count d'Estrades in the belief that it would be refused; but when the States-General seemed disposed to grant it, he appeared averse from it. Having no fear that Spain would declare war against him, he cared little about a treaty which he had been forced to accept, and which he was himself inclined to break. He contented himself with replying to the offer which had been made to him 'that the surest guarantee of peace would be his desire to maintain it.' The States had thus vainly endeavoured to content him, and found themselves again repulsed. Still unwearied, they continued to offer him tokens of their deference. On learning with some uneasiness that Louis XIV. attended by his court and his household troops was coming to visit his new possessions in the Netherlands, they sent to meet him a formal deputation

headed by the son of their late Admiral, Wassenaar Obdam, who belonged to one of the first families in the land. Obdam was commissioned to deliver to him a letter assuring him 'of the continuance of their affection,' and praying him to place full confidence in the statements of their ambassador. Received by the King at Ryssel, May 23, 1670, he was obliged to be satisfied with the marks of cold civility which were reproduced by Louis in his answer to the letter from the States.

It was not offers of co-operation, of friendship or submission, that the King of France desired to obtain from the States-General. He hoped, on the contrary, to discover in their conduct towards him subject for complaint which might give him the pretext he sought for a rupture. 'It would be well,' wrote Lionne to Pomponne, 'that they should accumulate one fault upon another, for his Majesty will thus be better justified in the eyes of the world if an opportunity should present itself to let them feel the weight of his hand.'

That he might leave his ambassador in no doubt as to the part on which he had now irrevocably determined, Louis XIV. took advantage of his journey to Flanders to send for him. Whilst the Grand Pensionary was hoping that this interview might be favourable to fresh attempts at reconciliation, Pomponne was learning from the king himself, in a mysterious communication, that the United Provinces had nothing to expect from France but a speedy declaration of war. His manuscript memoirs give us a curious account of this royal confidence. 'On the eve of my departure,' he writes, 'I had hardly got into bed, when I was awakened by the Marquis de Berny, son of Monsieur de Lionne, who in his father's absence exercised his functions about the king. He told me to rise at once, as his Majesty wished to speak to me. We repaired alone and without lights to the guard-room. I remained there in an obscure corner until all those who have the right of remaining at the King's *petit coucher* had taken their leave. Then the Marquis de Berny came to fetch me, and led me to the King's room without my being seen by anyone. I found the King alone, in his dressing-gown, sitting at the table. He did me the honour to tell me that the importance

of the things he was about to disclose to me would sufficiently show me what confidence he placed in me, and how necessary was the discretion with which I must guard them. He then explained to me fully all the measures that he had taken, and which would allow him in the following year to commence the war with the republic. Having represented to me that only three of his ministers, Lionne, Letellier, and Colbert, were acquainted with this profound State secret, the King concluded the interview by informing me that he had thought it essential to acquaint me with the true state of affairs, that I might regulate my conduct in Holland accordingly, evading any proposals that might be made to me, and merely appearing to listen to them so as to elude the penetration of the Grand Pensionary and the suspicions of the States. Touched as was fitting by the confidence of the King, and enlightened by the new knowledge he had given to me, I quitted the apartment as secretly as I had entered it, and returned to the Hague.' The assurances given by Pomponne to De Witt when he declared to him 'that the King had the more readily received his overtures, that he considered them as a mark of his desire to bring back his employers to their original connection with France,' could not restore to the Grand Pensionary his lost confidence. It was not long before his apprehensions were justified.

Four months later, in August 1670, Louis XIV. put to the proof the often-tried patience of the States-General, and invited a quarrel by his audacious aggression in full time of peace upon their ally the Duke of Lorraine, whose dominions he had long coveted. He looked upon them, as De Witt remarked, 'as a citadel in a town from which all the rest would be commanded at leisure.' He had accordingly attempted to turn to profit the weakness of mind and irregularities of conduct of the reigning duke, which seemed to place him at his mercy. Charles IV., Duke of Lorraine, belonging to one of the most ancient princely families of Europe, was a hero of romance who had strayed by mistake into the seventeenth century. Brave and adventurous, gifted with talents for war, but tormented by the wish to play a great part, 'and having

neither stability of character nor consistency of conduct,' he had entered into a struggle with Richelieu which had been fatal to himself and ruinous to his country. Expelled once, in 1634, and reduced to being merely, as Saint Simon writes, 'a prince-errant without hearth or home,' he had taken service with the Fronde, and had subsequently endured the persecution of the Spanish Government, who had held him prisoner for six years. Having recovered his dominions by the Peace of the Pyrenees, in 1659, he had three years later transferred his succession to Louis XIV., to the prejudice of his nephew, in consideration of the princes of the House of Lorraine being recognised as princes of the blood-royal of France. This convention had barely been signed before he repented it, but he had only been able to release himself by surrendering to Louis the strong place of Marsal, which gave the key of Lorraine into the hands of the King of France.

Constantly threatened with a fresh invasion, Charles IV. had yet been forced after the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle to dismiss his troops, as Louis feared that the Duke might place them at the disposal of the United Provinces. That he might not be left defenceless, he endeavoured to obtain the guarantee of his dukedom by the States-General, England, and Sweden, in consideration of his participation in the Triple Alliance, promising to persuade the Electors of Trèves and Mayence to follow his example. Louis XIV., getting scent of these negotiations by the despatch of the Duke's chief agent Monsieur de Risaucourt to the Hague, became uneasy, though he affected to laugh at them. He feared that the offers of Charles IV. in favour of the Triple Alliance might be an encouragement not only to the Princes of the Empire, but to the Emperor himself, and might thus become an obstacle to his designs upon the Netherlands and the United Provinces. After menacing with his anger the Grand Pensionary of Holland if he accepted the proposals of the Duke of Lorraine, he resolved to find in them the pretext he sought to increase his kingdom by the annexation of a new province.

Without any preliminary declaration of war, and in time of full peace, the King of France sent his forces to invade

Lorraine, but did not succeed in obtaining possession of the person of Charles IV., who sought safety in a prompt flight and retired to Cologne. The town of Épinal, where a few nobles had gathered round them the Duke's household troops and the militia of the country, was the only place that attempted resistance. A month sufficed to complete the subjection of the duchy. For twenty-seven years Lorraine was to lose her independence. But the old Duke cherished so obstinate a faith in the justice of his cause, and his nephew Charles V. rendered such brilliant services to the enemies of France as commander-in-chief of the German armies, that Louis XIV. was compelled by the peace of Ryswick, in 1697, to restore to the young heir of Charles V. possession of his hereditary dominions.

So audacious a violation of the rights of nations was a challenge to all Europe. The United Provinces could not conceal from themselves the dangers with which this enterprise menaced them. In arrogating to himself the right of attacking and conquering other countries without first demanding reparation for any offence, Louis XIV. gave warning to the republic of the fate that awaited it. Accordingly, notwithstanding the circumspection they still desired to preserve, the States-General warmly welcomed the envoys of the Duke of Lorraine, who came to demand their intervention. Recalling his pacific declarations to the French ambassador, they pressed him to make known the grievances which Louis XIV. could bring against Charles IV., and had the boldness to represent to him that Lorraine should at least be restored to the duke's nephew, who was his lawful heir. Louis XIV. contented himself with alleging that the Duke had been the aggressor, by concerting measures with the States-General and the German Princes for the concentration of a body of troops between the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Sarre. He accused him of having by this means intended to place auxiliary forces at the disposal of Spain, for the renewal of the war in the event of Spain refusing to execute the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. He affirmed also in his despatches that the Duke's envoy had negotiated this treaty with the Grand Pensionary,

and wrote to his ambassador 'that the denials of John de Witt seemed to him impudent.'

Unable to flatter themselves that they could obtain justice single-handed, the States-General placed their hopes in the appeal which they addressed to the Emperor and the King of England, who were both interested in preventing the King of France from aggrandising himself at the expense of his neighbours. They spared no pains, therefore, to secure their efficacious assistance.

The negotiations entrusted to Bruyninx, their envoy at Vienna, to induce the Emperor to join the Triple Alliance, had remained until now in suspense. The French ambassador, the Chevalier de Gremonville, by launching the feeble Leopold upon a fresh sea of doubt, and intimidating him with threats, had deterred him from all projects of an agreement with the republic. But the invasion of Lorraine suddenly dispelled the good understanding between the two courts. Charles IV. found the Emperor the more disposed to protect him since his nephew, after the brilliant share he had taken in the victory of St. Gothard over the Turks in 1663, had been appointed general of the imperial cavalry. Moreover, the conquest of his duchy, which extended as far as Alsace and which was a dependency of the Empire, could not fail to appear alarming to Germany. Called upon by the Diet of Ratisbon to obtain the restoration of the Duke's dominions, the Emperor determined to send Count Windischgrätz, one of the principal personages at his court, as ambassador to Louis XIV. to offer his mediation; it was rejected with haughty arrogance. 'This country belongs to me,' the King of France declared to the imperial envoy, 'and nobody has now a better right to it than I have.' The Emperor resented the affront offered to him by such a reply, and recalled his ambassador.

De Witt took skilful advantage of this change of sentiment, to concert with the envoy of the court of Vienna at the Hague, Baron Lisola, the draft of a treaty by which the Emperor was to join the Triple Alliance, to guarantee the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and to bind himself even to

break with France should Louis attack the United Provinces. Leopold allowed himself to be persuaded. Notwithstanding the disavowals addressed to Lisola by his ministers, and the assurances which the French ambassador still continued to extract from him, he consented to take the step required, and wrote to Charles II. to inform him that he offered to join in the Triple Alliance.

Whilst the States-General were thus obtaining an almost unhopd-for declaration of support, the King of England, whose co-operation they had a right confidently to expect, rejected the proposals made by the Emperor, and thus made public his complicity with France. At the first news of the invasion of Lorraine, the Grand Pensionary accompanied by the commissioners from the States-General had visited the English ambassador, Sir William Temple, to represent to him strongly the dangers of this aggression and this conquest. It was by the orders, he said, of the States-General that he had come to consult with him, in order that the powers which had entered into the Triple Alliance might act in concert. He requested him, therefore, to ask for instructions without loss of time, as the United Provinces could not dispense with the co-operation of Charles in settling upon a course of action. 'If England,' he added, 'did not come to their assistance, they must commit themselves to the grace of God, and would see the French at their gates without flinching.' Charles only replied to this communication by summoning Temple to give an account of his embassy. Arlington, in transmitting to him this unexpected command, instructed him, it is true, to assure the States that his absence would not be of long duration, and enjoined him to leave his family at the Hague. But the recall of the most loyal champion of the English alliance at the moment when it was most necessary to the United Provinces, left no room for further vain illusions.

On being informed of the departure of the ambassador on whose support he counted to avert the approaching peril, the Grand Pensionary could not conceal from Temple his surprise. He first enumerated to him the reasons for mistrust which the English Government had given to the States-General, and then

brought forward on the other side all the tokens of good-will and loyalty offered by the United Provinces. He solemnly recalled to him all the promises made by the King of England, 'without,' he said, 'going so far as to accuse him of wishing to break them, to the prejudice of his interest and his honour.' 'You know better than anyone,' he added, 'that it was the King your master who persuaded the States to sacrifice the old friendship which bound them to France, in order to guard him against the danger of her power, when they could have obtained all that they desired from her, in consideration of the partition of Flanders.' Then, abandoning all circumlocution, and addressing the English ambassador with the familiarity usual between them, he called upon him to explain this mystery. Temple responded to his confidence as a man of honour. He did not conceal from him that the same reflections had crossed his mind, but he could not bring himself to believe that any government was capable of taking measures so inimical to its own good name and to the interests of the public. To temper this avowal, he added that the despatches sent to him had never ceased to be favourable to the alliance between the two countries, and was careful to let De Witt see some possibility of his return. He proudly declared, however, that he could only answer for himself, but assured him that if such a change of policy occurred, he would have no hand in it, as he had already frequently protested to the King himself. 'I have no further information to give you at present,' he concluded, 'excepting that I must go to England. If I return, you will know more, and I feel sure from what you have said to me that if I do not return you will guess still further.' De Witt smiled sadly, and replied that in the mean time 'he would try to cure himself and others of all suspicions concerning this journey.' The conversation was too painful for both not to desire to bring it to an end, and they parted never to meet again. Such was the last interview of the two great ministers who appreciated each other as friends as well as statesmen. The account left by Temple bears the touching impress of the sadness with which they bade each other farewell.

As soon as he arrived in London, Temple found that his

suspicions must give place to certainty. After keeping him a long time waiting for an audience, Arlington received him with unusual coldness instead of his customary kindness, and in order to avoid talking of business, called to his side his little daughter of three years of age, whose presence served to interrupt all conversation. The next day, instead of presenting Temple to the King, he took him to meet Charles while the latter was walking in the Mall, and amusing himself with feeding his ducks. The King received him civilly, but carefully avoided talking to him of his embassy. Temple could no longer feel any doubt as to the cause of this intentional silence, after hearing the vehement invectives to which Sir Thomas Clifford gave way in the interview which followed the royal audience. Clifford, whose impetuous temper sometimes led him into indiscretions, complained that the States-General had not been brought to reason. On Temple demanding an explanation of this reproof, and asking to be told what he thought a man could do more, Clifford replied angrily, 'he would tell him what a man might do more and what he ought to do more: which was to let the King and all the world know how basely and unworthily the States had used him; and to declare publicly how their ministers were a company of rogues and rascals, and not fit for his Majesty or any other prince to have anything to do with.' Temple met this outburst with imperturbable calmness. He answered Clifford that 'he was not a man fit to make declarations; that whenever he did upon any occasion he should speak of all men what he thought of them, and so he should do of the States and their ministers.' Too honest to sacrifice his opinions to his interest, and quite aware that his truth and candour would bring disgrace upon him, he made up his mind to retirement. 'I have been long enough in courts and public business,' he wrote afterwards to his father, 'to know a great deal of the world and of myself, and to find that we are not made for one another.' Accordingly he retired to his country house in search of the tranquillity of private life. He appeared to himself more fitted to make a good gardener than an able minister; and 'the fruits of his garden,' he declared

sarcastically, 'seemed to him to preserve better than those of his embassies.' The alliance between England and the Republic of the United Provinces, which had been the object of his policy, could no longer afford him any hope of continuance, and he had to look on sadly at the ruin of the work which he had hoped to render of service to the peace of Europe.

The persevering efforts of the Grand Pensionary to bring to a conclusion the negotiations carried on by Van Beuningen in London, were doomed to remain without effect. In vain did De Witt urge the King of England to reply to the invasion of Lorraine by agreeing to the admission of the Emperor into the Triple Alliance. Charles II. showed complete indifference to the fate of the dispossessed prince notwithstanding the services rendered to him in his exile by the Duke of Lorraine, and he continued to evade the proposals of the States. Having declared that he should wait until the Emperor avowed his intentions in a preliminary declaration, he paid no attention to it when it was transmitted to him. Van Beuningen, with difficulty undeceived, was forced to leave London at last, having obtained nothing but barren promises of good-will. 'I am willing,' he writes, 'to throw no doubt upon the protestations of sincerity constantly made to me by Secretary Trevor; but I begin to believe that he is himself deceived, and I cannot help remarking that Arlington, who until now had appeared to me to remain steadfast in his favourable disposition, is seeking for quibbles, as if he were desirous to transfer his affections.'

The urgency of the ordinary ambassador, Boreel, continued after Van Beuningen's departure, only served to obtain his dismissal. The States, made proof against discouragement by De Witt, instructed Boreel to address a last appeal to the King of England, representing to him that he could not refuse to admit the Emperor into the Triple Alliance without at least offering some explanation to the allies, on whom he was thus inflicting a great wrong. Charles II., considering all concealment superfluous, declared to him 'that he was on good terms with France, and did not choose to

disoblige her,' adding 'that the interests of the Empire did not concern England.' Boreel transmitted to the States this communication, which closed the way to all negotiation, and announced to them the dissolution of the Triple Alliance. 'I am enjoying by anticipation,' wrote the French ambassador at the Hague to Louis XIV., 'the pleasure of seeing the growing division in a union which was supposed to be established against France, and the satisfaction of seeing that the ruin of a work which has occupied the courts of Europe for nearly three years is the result of the conduct and skill of your Majesty.'

But there was a still more formidable peril awaiting the States-General than the abandonment with which they were thus menaced: the union of their allies with their enemies was what they had now to fear. The alliance between Charles II. and Louis XIV. prepared and concluded behind their backs exposed them to a double attack, under the weight of which it seemed inevitable that they should be crushed.

Faithless to his engagements with the republic, Charles II. had made the first advances towards France. They were at first coldly received. Louis XIV., distrusting the discretion of the King of England, hesitated to confide to him his projects against the United Provinces, 'from fear that the secret might become only a stage aside, and might soon cross the sea to find out those who ought least to be acquainted with it.' Upon the report, however, of his ambassador in London, the Marquis de Ruigny, he saw that he might open his mind without fear, and he hastened to secure the treaty which he rightly called 'his great affair.' He entrusted this mission to the brother of the comptroller-general of the finances of the kingdom, the Marquis Colbert de Croissy, to whom he gave his instructions with injunctions of the strictest secrecy. The French plenipotentiaries were to offer to the King of England a league offensive and defensive, giving him to understand that the King of France might be inclined to make use of it against the United Provinces to punish them for having in the Triple Alliance failed in the obligations due from them to France. In order more surely to detach Charles from his alliance with

the republic, he was to inform him of the negotiations which the States-General had opened with the French Government, with a view to forcing the King of England to renounce the supremacy of the English flag in British waters. He was besides instructed to arouse his suspicions by persuading him that the States had transmitted to Louis proposals for the partition of the Netherlands, and thus falsely to represent them as disloyal to the Triple Alliance.

The inclinations of Arlington, who had always shown himself favourable to the United Provinces, fear of the national displeasure, and the necessity of treating Parliament with consideration in order to obtain subsidies, prolonged the hesitation of Charles, to the great annoyance of Louis XIV. At this time, the proposals hitherto interchanged between the two kings seemed about to take another course, and a change in the surrounding circumstances contributed to delay the final settlement. The Duke of York had renounced the Anglican faith, and after a course of instruction had been secretly received into the Roman Catholic Church. Obligated to conceal his conversion on account of the oppression exercised by Protestant intolerance on all those who were considered as papists or dissenters, he wished that Charles II. by openly following his example might enable him freely to profess his new belief. He hoped that, submitting to the royal authority, England would renounce the reformed religion as readily as she had embraced it. Charles II., who had no religious convictions, shared from political motives the sentiments of the Duke of York, and was impatient to execute the projects suggested by his brother. Their success appeared to him to depend upon the co-operation of the King of France, which he could not dispense with in order to free himself from the dependence in which he was held by his Parliament. Distrusting the Duke of Buckingham, whom he knew to be attached to Protestantism and hostile to the Duke of York, he thought it best to keep him in the dark, and preferred to take as his confidant Arlington, who had shown himself favourable to the Catholic religion, and whom he instructed to discover the secret to Louis XIV. While thus revealing to his minister his

ideas of conversion, the King of England found himself obliged at the same time to make known to him his projects of an alliance with Louis, the execution of which he could no longer delay, the King of France being less inclined than ever to let himself be deterred by religious interests from the political aim that he was pursuing with such ardour and perseverance. Up to this time Arlington had been in ignorance of the negotiations destined openly to destroy the Triple Alliance, as Charles thought him too much in favour of the cause of the United Provinces to have confidence in his co-operation. Flattered by his master's trust, and jealously eager to supplant the Duke of Buckingham, he now lent himself without scruple to the change in foreign policy required of him, and proved himself henceforward the devoted adherent of the French alliance.

According to his instructions Arlington was required to obtain from Louis XIV. a favourable reception for the pecuniary requirements of the King of England. Charles II. in fact was prepared to set a price upon his conversion as well as upon his alliance, and, under pretext of the service he should render to Louis XIV. by declaring himself a Catholic, wished to drive a bargain over his change of religion. His demands again endangered the agreement which had been arrived at. He required that the King of France should come to his assistance to make England Catholic, before engaging his kingdom in war with the United Provinces, and demanded, both for his conversion and for his military co-operation, subsidies amounting to 1,000,000*l.*, which Louis refused to grant. Charles, however, soon lowered his demands, while on his side Louis recognised the necessity of humouring him.

The last difficulties were overcome by the journey to England of Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, sister of Charles II. Accustomed to receive the homage of a court of which she seemed to be the true queen, enjoying the favour of the king her brother-in-law, lauded to the skies first by Corneille and then by Racine, to whom she suggested his tragedy of 'Berenice,' Henrietta of Orleans was impatient to try her hand at politics, and Louis was happy to gratify her wishes. For some months past Charles had been inviting her to visit

England; and the King of France, who wished to turn her journey to account to bring to a conclusion the negotiations in hand, urged her to respond to his request. But the Duke of Orleans refused to permit her departure. Abandoned to the scandalous dissipations of a libertine existence, he had always neglected his young wife, and yet was jealous of her participation in public affairs as well as of the attachment shown for her by Louis XIV. Feeling himself humiliated by being kept in ignorance of negotiations confided to her, he very nearly insisted upon her remaining at home. Having with difficulty obtained the desired consent, she followed the King to Flanders, and afterwards proceeded to Calais, where she took ship. Before her departure she was placed in communication with Pomponne, the French ambassador at the Hague, whom Louis had sent for to initiate him in his secret policy. 'She asked,' writes Pomponne, 'for all the necessary information on the state of affairs in Holland, with which she seemed already well informed. I was surprised to find such intelligence and capacity for business in a youthful princess, who appeared born only for the graces that adorn her sex.'

Charles II. came down to Dover to receive his sister in state, with marks of the most tender affection. She persuaded him to postpone the declaration intended to announce his change of religion, and first to commence war upon the United Provinces. Ten days sufficed to settle definitively the conditions already accepted on either side, and the treaty containing them was privately signed by Arlington and the French ambassador on June 1, 1670. The King of England obtained from the King of France as the price of his conversion a promise of assistance to the amount of 80,000*l.* He bound himself on his side to commence hostilities against the States-General simultaneously with him, by furnishing his ally with a reinforcement of 4,000 men and fifty ships of war, for which a subsidy of 120,000*l.* was to be paid to him. In consideration of this payment he was to content himself with having assigned to him Walcheren, Sluys, and the island of Cadsand from the conquests made in the United Provinces. A present of 8,000 crowns was offered to Arlington, who received express

commands from Charles II. to accept it. The King of France did not confine himself to the pecuniary largesses lavished upon his royal ally. He knew that the love of pleasure was equally potent with the King of England, and to gain him more securely to his cause he was not ashamed to send with the Duchess of Orleans one of her most attractive maids-of-honour, Mademoiselle de Kerouaille. She was charged to ingratiate herself with Charles II., and acquitted herself of her task so well, that she superseded Lady Castlemaine in his favours, and became almost immediately his recognised mistress with the title of Duchess of Portsmouth. The alliance of France and England against the United Provinces was concluded with every precaution necessary for secrecy, and the festivities of a dissolute court allowed the enemies of the republic to surround with an impenetrable mystery the iniquitous bargain to which the United Provinces were to be sacrificed.

Hardly had the agreement been signed, before a tragic event almost broke it off. A week after her return from England, the Duchess of Orleans, in the bloom of youth and the flush of success in her mission, was carried off in a few hours in her palace at Saint-Cloud by an appallingly sudden death, whose tragic recollection has been preserved for us through all subsequent years by Bossuet's funeral oration. Accusations of poison soon spread, and fell upon the Chevalier de Lorraine, a declared enemy of the princess, who had obtained his exile in order to release the Duke of Orleans from the shameless rule of his favourite, and violent indignation was aroused in the English court. Irrefutable proofs of natural death were collected by the most careful investigation of the court of France, and have been confirmed by the researches of modern science, which, in the report of the post-mortem examination, and the contemporary accounts, discovers every sign of perforation of the intestines. But the proofs were not sufficient to dispel the painful suspicions of Charles II. and his ministers. The cloud, however, was only temporary, and the negotiations between the two courts were soon resumed.

Without repenting the treaty that he had just signed, Charles felt some embarrassment in communicating it to his ministers. He feared that the Duke of Buckingham, who was hostile to the Catholic party, might take offence, and that by his indiscretion he might arouse the alarms of the Protestants, of whom Parliament would not fail to make itself the mouth-piece. He accordingly urgently requested that a new treaty, the articles of which he might openly appeal to, should be substituted for that which had just been signed. He declared himself, however, none the less ready to confirm the clauses of the original convention with the exception of the change of religion, of which no mention was to be made. He was bent upon thus averting the suspicions of his most confidential advisers, and calculated upon profiting by fresh negotiations to obtain more advantageous conditions. Louis, in fact, 'not wishing,' as he wrote to his ambassador, 'to risk a shipwreck in the very harbour,' disposed of all difficulties by further concessions. Besides the command of both fleets being assigned to the Duke of York, he consented to allow precedence to the commander of the English auxiliary corps over the lieutenant-generals of his land forces. Charles II. moreover was not satisfied with increasing the share of booty reserved to England. He obtained a promise that besides the war subsidy which he was to receive, the sum of 80,000*l.* which was to be given to him for his conversion should be paid in the three months following the ratification of the treaty, under the name of extraordinary subsidies, without his being bound to fix the period he might choose for the announcement of his change of religion. Finally, in his intense desire for securities against the fresh negotiations which he was always fearing between France and the United Provinces, he required from Louis XIV. a pledge to open the campaign at the very beginning of the year 1672. These conventions having been signed after circumlocutions which several times endangered their conclusion, an ostensible though still secret treaty concluded in London replaced that which had been signed at Dover.

Charles II. thus sacrificed to blind, grasping, and hateful

passions the traditionary interests of his kingdom, which must of necessity be endangered by French aggrandisement on the Continent. He took no heed of the feelings of the English nation, which, from a love of civil freedom and from community of religion, was well disposed towards the republic of the United Provinces. In vain had he made Louis XIV. pledge himself to the observance of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle between France and Spain, attempting thus to secure the independence of the Netherlands, which was so precious to England. If once the United Provinces were conquered by the King of France, the Netherlands would then be wedged in between French possessions, and must sooner or later fall a prey to inevitable annexation. In vain did the ruin of the republic promise to gratify the commercial rivalry of England at the expense of the United Provinces. None the less would it destroy the naval power which could alone assist Charles II. to hold in check the domination of Louis XIV. over Europe. Thus in receiving the pay of the King of France to attack the United Provinces, Charles had good reasons for making difficulties with his ally. Louis in fact would reap all the benefits of the alliance.

The States-General had been kept in ignorance of the agreement between the two kings which was so threatening to their independence. The usually clear perception of the Grand Pensionary of Holland had been foiled by the pacific assurances which the ambassador of the United Provinces in England had been pleased to accredit. Too easily convinced by the declarations of the English minister, Van Beuningen announced to the States that there could be no danger to them in the Duchess of Orleans' journey. His confidence was increased by the death of that unfortunate princess. 'The kindly feelings that people had for France on account of the Duchess of Orleans,' he writes, 'will not to all appearance be continued. I have therefore good hopes that, before long, the English will have rather advanced towards us than drawn back.' The Grand Pensionary was reassured by these despatches. 'I cannot suppose,' he writes, 'such open perfidy on the part of the King of France as would be a rupture with-

out cause, and still less can I admit the idea of a treaty, and above all of a league with England.' In his correspondence with his brother-in-law, Deutz, he expresses his sentiments in language more homely but still more forcible: 'The news sent to us from France on the subject of an offensive league between France and England,' he writes, 'is in my opinion as far from the truth as the east is from the west.' His illusions, encouraged by those of Van Beuningen, were not yet dispelled.

It was not, however, for want of information. Hardly had the Triple Alliance been concluded, than the States of Holland received from Rome an anonymous letter, in which they were informed 'that they were threatened with a speedy turn of affairs by the union of England and France, who were concerting together for the reinstatement of the Prince of Orange.' A few months after this warning, De Groot, the Dutch ambassador in Sweden, writes to De Witt 'that the King of France will not fail to revenge himself on the United Provinces for having been forced to make peace with Spain, and that in especial he will omit nothing that can ruin their commerce, even to the extent of making a reciprocal treaty to that effect with the King of England.' According to the advice given to him by the Chancellor, Magnus de la Gardie, 'it was necessary to keep a watch on the movements of England, who was being much pressed by France, and to be suspicious of a naturally jealous and fickle nation and of a king who to all appearance was more inclined to Papistry than to Protestantism.' Later on the envoy of the States at Madrid gave them warning, on the information of the Queen-Regent of Spain, 'of the great intimacy of the French and English ministers in London and Paris, which they took so little trouble to conceal, that at a banquet they had drunk to the success of the armies of France and England, congratulating themselves on the annihilation of the Triple Alliance.' Finally still more direct communications had at least aroused suspicions of the negotiations which had been secretly conducted by the Duchess of Orleans. The Dutch ambassador in France had in fact received important revelations from a member of her suite, Mademoiselle de

Montalais, 'a young lady of good family and very clever,' who had long been mixed up with all the court intrigues. Her information, 'which taught him many things that he could not have known without her,' had opened his eyes sufficiently to enable him to assure De Witt that there was between the two kings 'not merely negotiations for an alliance, but an alliance already concluded.'

The Grand Pensionary, though he did not share his fears, could not remain unmoved by them, and communicated his tardy apprehensions to the ambassadors of the States. He did not conceal from himself the danger to which the States-General might be exposed by the abandonment of England, and had too much perspicacity not to have foreseen for some months past, that in the event of Louis XIV. in the face of all treaties attacking either the Netherlands or the United Provinces, 'there would be nothing to hope for from Charles II. notwithstanding all his pledges.' But his fears did not extend beyond a malevolent neutrality. He had no dread of the dangerous coalition with which the republic was now menaced. 'In France,' he writes to Boreel, 'it is said that England is completely won; you should therefore ascertain if King Charles has promised not to come to the assistance of our republic in case we cannot prevent France from attacking us and revenging herself upon us for the Triple Alliance.'

It was indeed the Triple Alliance which the republic was about to expiate. She was to pay dearly for the too great part she had played. Having humbled England by the treaty of Breda after a naval war, the States-General had thought that they might become the arbiters of Europe by allying themselves with their old enemy against France. But they had not foreseen that Charles and Louis might sacrifice their mutual resentment to a common work of vengeance which would be fatal to the United Provinces. They had allied themselves to England as to a free country which would be quite capable, if need were, of forcing her king to remain the ally of the United Provinces, without foreseeing that the king, by the aid of French subsidies, might free himself from all subjection to his Parliament, and thus change at his pleasure the

course of English policy. On the other hand, after incurring the implacable enmity of Louis XIV. by the opposition they had offered to his plans of conquest, they had too easily persuaded themselves that they could prevent him from punishing the offence of which they were guilty towards him, or that they could succeed in obtaining forgiveness. They had no suspicions of the steps the King of France was preparing to take, to make them repent of what Louis in his royal pride called 'the swaggering of these fishermen.' 'To all appearance their star is beginning greatly to pale,' writes the French ambassador at the Hague with unrestrained delight, 'and many clouds are forming, from which thunder may shortly be expected.'

Having saved the independence of the Spanish Netherlands, which they thought necessary to their own security, the United Provinces now found themselves threatened with invasion and conquest. Hardly three years after Spain had owed her safety to them, they were to be reduced to the impossibility of any longer protecting and saving themselves. The military and diplomatic successes which had secured them the highest rank among the powers of Europe, and in which De Witt had had so large a share, were but the prelude to misfortunes of which the Grand Pensionary was to be both witness and victim.

CHAPTER X.

RUPTURE OF PEACE AT HOME AND ABROAD—DESTRUCTION OF
JOHN DE WITT'S WORK.

Position of home affairs—Awakening of the Orange party—Youth and education of the Prince of Orange—His character—His ambition—His journey to Zealand—His nomination as premier noble of that province—His coming of age—Measures of resistance taken by the States of Holland—Intimidation of the Orange party—Policy of John de Witt—Agreement between the States of Holland and the States of Zealand—The Act of Harmony accepted by the provinces of Friesland and Groningen—Symptoms of division in Holland—Rivalry of Beverningh, Fagel, and Van Beuningen with the Grand Pensionary De Witt—The question of the entrance of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State again brought forward—Deliberation of the States of Holland as to the vote to be allowed him—Differences in their Assembly—De Witt tardily bestirs himself to put an end to them—The Prince of Orange admitted to the Council of State—His fruitless attempt to obtain the right of sitting in the States-General—Resignation of the Commissioners entrusted with his education—Advances made to him by Louis XIV. and Charles II.—His journey to England—Encouragement given by Charles II. to his partisans—De Witt refuses to countenance it—The two parties prepare to renew the struggle—Position of affairs abroad—Hatred of Louis XIV. to the United Provinces—His measures of repression towards their commerce—De Groot appointed ambassador to France—His negotiations—Louis XIV. refuses to give any satisfaction—Commercial reprisals exercised by the States-General—Resentment of Louis XIV.—De Witt disposed to assume the offensive—Illusions kept up by De Groot—Pomponne recalled from the Hague—Vain endeavours of the States-General to effect a reconciliation—Their letter to the King of France—De Groot admitted to an audience—Reply of Louis XIV.—A rupture imminent—Dissimulation of the King of England—Pacific assurances given by Van Beuningen on his return from his embassy to London—De Witt deceived by them—He advises a policy of conciliation—Loyalty of the Grand Pensionary to the Triple Alliance—Charles II. evades the negotiations—He reveals his designs—Final recall of Temple—Encounter of a yacht belonging to the King of England with the Dutch fleet—Claims of Charles II. to the saluting of his flag—Sir George Downing appointed ambassador to the Hague—Suspension of payments by the Exchequer—Prorogation of Parliament—Increasing demands of Charles II.—Downing leaves the Hague—Last negotiations—Charles II. refuses to continue them—His defection.

THE Grand Pensionary's work was threatened on all sides. Abroad, a most dangerous coalition was being concerted

against the republic, whilst the guarantees which had seemed to secure peace at home were powerless to insure its duration. By combining with England against France to protect the independence of the United Provinces, De Witt had renewed the hopes of the Orange party. When the States-General had replaced the alliance of Louis XIV. by that of Charles II. the partisans of a restoration had in fact easily persuaded themselves that the consequence must be the accession to power of the King of England's nephew, the young Prince of Orange, and full of confidence in an approaching change of government they accordingly set to work again. The Perpetual Edict which abolished the office of stadtholder in the province of Holland and made it incompatible with that of captain-and admiral-general had not discouraged them, and they were only watching for a favourable moment to take their revenge. 'I learn,' writes Lionne to the French ambassador, D'Estrades, 'that great cabals are already forming against the authority of Monsieur de Witt, with the purpose of overthrowing it.'

'The House of Orange,' according to Wicquefort, 'had retained the attachment of all those who, finding themselves kept out of office and employment, hoped to be restored to them by the advancement of the Prince; and his enemies, who were called the protectors of freedom, had not had either the strength or the wisdom to destroy so powerful a faction.' Friesland and Groningen had remained the more faithful to him that they had retained as stadtholder the young son of their former governor William Frederick of Nassau, and among the other provinces there was not one in which he could not reckon upon the support of numerous defenders. Zealand, from rivalry with Holland, seemed most disposed openly to espouse the cause of the heir of the former stadtholders of the republic. The Councillor-Pensionary of that province, Peter de Huybert, was ambitious to assume the leadership of the Orange party, and thus to put himself forward as a rival to the Grand Pensionary of Holland, who had so long been acknowledged as the chief of the republican party. The clergy also, who could not forget the services rendered to the reformed

religion by the Princes of Orange, continued to give to the son of William II. the support of their voices, and unceasingly attacked the ingratitude of the States of Holland. Notwithstanding all threats of censorship and repression, the pulpit remained a platform for the Opposition.

The policy of conciliation which the Grand Pensionary flattered himself he had successfully carried out, was to miscarry by the act of the Prince of Orange himself. Arrived at the age of eighteen, he was impatient to establish what he considered his rights. Although educated in the school of adversity from his earliest infancy, he had never lost belief in his fortune notwithstanding all adverse appearances. Against the obstacles opposed to his elevation he had early commenced a struggle which he carried through unflinchingly and from which he finally issued victorious. Grandson of the unfortunate Charles I. and nephew of the Pretender, who had wandered over Europe from one refuge to another, he had from his infancy been exposed to the persecutions of Cromwell, who, by insisting upon the Act of Exclusion, had closed to him the road to power. He had moreover been sacrificed to the resentment of the republican party, which had been so rashly provoked by the last stadtholder in his attempted coup d'état. Born a week after his father's death, and never recognised as heir to his father's power, the sole guardians of his cradle had been two women, his mother and his grandmother. Neither of them had done any real service to his cause. His mother, both proud and shy, had never gained favour with the public. His grandmother had injured him by her intrigues. In later years the restoration of Charles II. to the English throne had renewed in his favour the prestige of royal relationship, and the urgent recommendation in favour of his nephew which the new king hastened to address to the States of Holland, had seemed the signal for a speedy restoration of the stadtholdership. But the war entered into by Charles with the United Provinces, in which the complicity of the Orange party with the King of England was made manifest, had soon aroused suspicions of the Prince of Orange, by giving rise to fears that his family connections might make him subservient to English

policy. Nothing remained to him but the renown of the services rendered by his ancestors; but in the critical moment when the independence of a nation is at stake, the charm of such recollections is far more powerful, even in republics, than the fear of princely ambition.

The popular fame of his origin had kept up the hopes of his partisans as well as the fears of his enemies. Cromwell himself seems to have foreseen the irresistible force that he would gather from it, and had predicted to the Dutch ambassador Beverningh 'that this William, the son of the late king's daughter, would increase constantly in greatness.' According to the witness of a French gentleman, who lived at the court of the Princess-Dowager and who draws a portrait of the young prince at the age of sixteen, 'his carriage, his features, and his glance bore witness that through his maternal grandfather and grandmother, Charles I. and Henrietta Maria of France, he was of kin to the two greatest kings in the world.' Delicate and even somewhat weakly, in consequence of his rapid growth, sickly in appearance but gifted with a natural energy which enabled him to inure himself to the hardships of a campaign, William of Orange bore all the outward signs of a princely origin. A boldly curved aquiline nose, and an ample forehead shaded by thick curling brown hair, gave a very marked character to his face. His mouth, merely indicated by thin compressed lips, testified to uncommon strength of will. His piercing glance revealed the fire within; its brilliancy remained to the last, and in after years the Duke of Berwick, when brought before him as a prisoner, said 'that he recognised him at once by his eagle eye.' His education had prepared him to profit by the chances of fortune which the future held in store for him. From it he obtained the strong bent of religious belief to which he remained faithfully attached all his life, and to which he owed the vocation he believed to be his, that of personifying in himself the defence of Protestantism. The instruction which he received and the good examples set before him familiarised him from his earliest years with a strictness of conduct which preserved him from all youthful follies, and even brought upon him the

reproach of unsociability. Gaming, frivolous conversation, and the excesses of the table, so opposed to his sober tastes, kept him aloof from the world. His natural reserve and taciturn gravity made him a stranger to the amusements of his age. If he went out in the evening at the Hague, 'he left the party,' writes Gourville, 'at half-past eight.' Hunting was his only amusement, to which he added afterwards the love of war. He felt himself to be made for action. The austere regularity of his life justified, by the example it offered, the advice that he gave to the youths around him. At the age of fourteen he writes in French to Baron Freisheim, an ensign in the army, 'I fear that you may have become a rake, since while in my service you were so already, and now that you are left to yourself I am afraid that you may give yourself up to dissipation entirely. I can assure you, however, that you will repent one day. I conjure you to keep good company, for if you fall into bad you will be utterly spoiled. If you do not as far as possible follow my advice you shall never possess my friendship, but if you do I will love you greatly and will seek occasion to show you that I am your very good friend.'

Although some writers have asserted that his education was neglected, he had profited by the pains taken with him by his first tutor, Frederick of Nassau, Lord of Zuylestein, but had never acquired any extensive knowledge of science, letters, or history. The study of languages was the only one that seemed to please him. He spoke equally well Dutch, French, English, and German, and understood Spanish, Italian, and Latin, so that he was able, as he grew up, to maintain intimate relations with the foreign ministers at the Hague. By this means he was initiated into the policy of the different courts of Europe, and acquired in his youth that knowledge of diplomacy which he afterwards turned to such good account. 'From time to time,' writes Saint Evremond in 1665, 'we go to pay our respects to the prince, who would have reason to complain of me if I said no more than that rarely has a person of his quality shown such intelligence at his age.'

The States of Holland, on assuming the direction of his

education, had undertaken to complete it. He profited by the instructions given to him under their auspices and superintended by the Grand Pensionary himself with scrupulous regularity, and owned later how much he had gained in this intimate intercourse with a great statesman who reserved to himself the political education of his pupil. The pupil in after days did honour to his master, excepting in the ingratitude with which alone he rewarded him. If he did not leave John de Witt's hands transformed into a great citizen, he at least received from the First Minister of the republic those precepts and examples of loyalty to his country which made him a prince among a thousand.

His character was superior even to his intellect, and in adversity he acquired a precocious maturity of judgment. Not being by nature timorous, as he proudly declared in later years to Arlington, but concealing vehement passions under an impassible exterior; inheriting from his father the Dutch phlegm and from his mother the English practical good sense; he was gifted with an obstinate perseverance that made him impervious to all discouragement. He was likely to justify the prediction of Count d'Estrades, who had said that if the heir of the House of Orange lived to manhood he might be expected to make a great stir, and 'that quite possibly might be seen revived in him his ancestors—William the Silent, Maurice, and Frederick Henry.'

D'Estrades had seen, in the dispute for the precedence of their carriages at Voorhout, how bent upon maintaining the privileges of his birth was the young prince and how ready always to assert them. Deprived as he was of all authority, he could not resign himself to not being treated as the principal personage in the State. When the army had been assembled on the Flemish frontier, he had insisted, against the advice given to him, on repairing to the camp at Bergen-op-Zoom. But the officers had been forbidden to receive him with military honours, and at the dinner to which he was invited by De Noortwijk, the Master-General of Ordnance, he had been placed below the deputies of the States. The Prince took offence and refused to call upon them. In order to obtain

possession of power he was ready to attempt anything, but would risk nothing; pausing if necessary, but only to resume more surely his onward progress, and steadily pursuing his designs, while he was skilful enough to conceal them. His habit of concealing his feelings, which is mentioned by Count d'Estrades, who adds that he would turn it to account for his own ends, arose from the distrust which had become habitual to him in his daily life. Forced to impose restraint upon himself before his mother and grandmother, who had disputed his early education between them; obliged in his youth to exercise the same restraint towards the States of Holland when he had been placed under their guardianship; he had kept a watch over his words and actions which had accustomed him to allow nothing to be discovered of what was in his mind. While still very young he gave a remarkable example of this, in the year 1668, which has been carefully reported in his memoirs by an eye-witness, Gourville, one of the best of the French diplomatic agents. The Prince of Orange, whose good graces Gourville had succeeded in obtaining, was conversing familiarly with him one day in his palace and expressing his irritation against De Witt, to whom he attributed the Perpetual Edict, when the latter was suddenly announced. The Prince went forward to meet the Grand Pensionary without any embarrassment, and thanked him with a smiling countenance for having done what he could in his interests. 'When the Prime Minister had retired,' says Gourville, 'I approached the young Prince and looked him straight in the face, as if to give him a glance of meaning without being seen by the others. He told me afterwards that he had been quite aware of what I wished him to see. We agreed that he ought to act thus until the time came when he might be able to adopt a different course. I told him laughingly that he knew a great deal for his age.'

It was the more easy for the Prince of Orange to encourage a belief in his resignation to his present position, since he had neither the virtues nor the vices fitted to win popular favour. His silence, his economy, his apparent timidity, his strictness of life, seemed to forbid popularity. Neither did he appear

inclined to seek it, and those who were interested in his cause felt some anxiety on this account. 'The affection which the populace preserve for him,' writes Pomponne, 'requires to be entertained by affability, liberality, and attentions. Greater readiness for showing himself, for talking to all sorts of people, even for intercourse with women—who in Holland more than in any other place in the world have power with their husbands—would certainly be of much advantage to him.' But it was not necessary for him to make any effort to please. He was loved without any advances being required from him, and gratitude to his ancestors sufficed to pave the way to an inevitable restoration in his favour, hastened by events which made him not only the ruler but the saviour of the United Provinces. His ambition was thus to be justified by the patriotic work towards whose accomplishment he used his power.

At the moment when he was about to take upon himself the leadership of his party, the difficulty of his task seemed increased by the lack of good advisers. When, at the age of ten, the death of the Princess-Royal had left him an orphan, he had kept aloof from the Princess-Dowager, against whom his mother had prejudiced him in consequence of the misunderstandings which had always divided them. He could not forgive his grandmother the part which she was suspected to have played in the restitution of the principality of Orange to the King of France, and he never showed any affection towards her. His indifference appears from the letter of gentle reproach that she afterwards addressed to him on the occasion of his being appointed stadtholder: 'I must complain of you,' she writes to him, 'that you never tell me a word of what happens to you;' and she adds: 'You know that there is no one in the world who loves you so dearly as I do. You may suppose how greatly this afflicts me, but I will not cease to love you and pray God for you, and I shall die, my dear son, your very faithful grandmother, Amelia, Princess of Orange.'

The young Prince had placed his confidence in his tutor, Frederick of Nassau, his father's illegitimate brother. But the latter had been dismissed by the States of Holland, who were

suspicious of the power he wielded, and Van Ghent, the new tutor appointed, had incurred the Prince's dislike. He needed a confidant, and chose for that purpose William van Odyk, the son of his mother's most trusty adviser, Louis of Nassau, Lord of Beverwaert, whom the Stadtholder Maurice had acknowledged as his natural son. Odyk, after a dissipated youth spent in Paris, had returned to the United Provinces, obtained the command of a troop of cavalry, and married a rich woman in Zeeland. His connections gave him consequence, and his powers of intellect enabled him to do good service. 'He will do more harm than you can imagine,' writes Bampffield, one of the Grand Pensionary's constant correspondents, 'on account of his talents—which are such that I think there can be none greater—and his subtlety of mind and powers of judgment can only do mischief.' His skill in business secured him the confidence of the Prince, who was too restricted in his surroundings to be able freely to choose his friends. Odyk prepared the way for his appearance, and artfully contrived a favourable opportunity for the ward of the States of Holland to play the part of a pretender.

His hopes of dominion foiled by the Perpetual Edict, the son of the late Stadtholder had resolved, as soon as he was eighteen, to claim the inheritance of his fathers. No attempt even being possible in Holland, he chose Zeeland as the place whence to give his partisans the first signal for a restoration. The States of that province had conferred upon him some years previously, as Marquis of Ter-Veer and Flushing, the dignity of premier noble, which made him the representative of the nobility of that province. As soon as his age permitted him to exercise this privilege, he took steps to assume it publicly. Closely guarded by De Witt, who considered himself responsible for the education he received, and who never passed a day without visiting him, he could not quit the Hague unless he could elude the vigilance of the Grand Pensionary. The absence of his tutor, Van Ghent, favoured his projects. Whilst the latter was visiting his estate in Guelders, the Prince of Orange wrote to him, and sent word at the same time to the Grand Pensionary, that he was going

to Breda, pretexting a hunting party for the sake of trying some hounds and hawks that had been sent to him by the King of England. But instead of stopping at Breda he continued his route to Bergen-op-Zoom, where a boat was waiting to carry him to Zeeland. The Princess-Dowager, who had concocted this journey with her grandson, had summoned from Cleves Prince John Maurice of Nassau, that he might take the Prince under his protection, as she feared the impetuosity of the young nobles who accompanied him. But the Prince of Nassau, after joining him at Breda, remained at Bergen-op-Zoom under pretence of illness, fearing to compromise himself by following him farther and sharing in his audacious undertaking.

Arrived at Rammekens, the Prince of Orange desired his Master of the Household to announce his arrival to the States of the province assembled in session at Middleburg, where his confidant Odyk had carefully superintended the preparations for his reception. Without hurrying himself he proceeded in his yacht to Middleburg, and at three o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, September 13, 1668, he made his entry into the harbour, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants. The magistrates of the town had come down to meet him, the burghers were in arms to receive him, and the ships dressed with flags answered the salute of his vessel by a triple discharge of their guns. He entered a coach drawn by six horses, and was conducted in state to the abbey, the former palace of his ancestors. Here the deputies of the States came to congratulate him; the councillor-pensionary of the province made a speech to him in their name, and the different representatives of the provincial government followed this example. 'Crowds are coming in from all sides,' writes the Prince's Master of the Household to the Princess-Dowager, 'the streets are nearly impassable, windows, roofs, even trees and masts, are black with spectators. The abbey is so full of people on foot and in carriages that it is hardly possibly to reach the Prince's apartment. The civic militia fired salutes in his honour during the two hours that he passed at the window, and there are to be fireworks all night.'

The next day the Prince, accompanied by a numerous suite, was conducted to the Hall of Assembly. The chair belonging to him as premier noble had been placed at the head of the table. He was requested to seat himself in it, and thus to assume the presidency of the assembly. His speech was a manifesto. After thanking the States for the loyalty which they had maintained towards him since the day of his birth, William continued: 'By conferring upon me to-day the dignity of premier noble, you have not confined the proofs of your affection to my person within the limits of your province, for you believed this to be a method of arousing in all the other provinces the sentiments which animate yourselves. The time fixed by you for my entrance upon office having arrived, I should not have considered myself to be making a fit response to your wishes if I had delayed taking possession of it. This is the motive that has brought me to your assembly.' He concluded his oration by renewing his promise to walk in the footsteps of his ancestors, 'to whom,' he said, 'no sacrifice had been too great for the preservation of the reformed religion.'

A triumphal progress followed the Prince's reception at Middleburg, to which he returned to obtain the acceptance of William van Odyk as his substitute. The powers that he exercised through the agency of his deputy insured him a preponderance of authority. As the delegate of the nobles who could only speak through his voice, and possessing besides the votes of the two towns of Flushing and Ter-Veer which he held in fief, the Prince could henceforth dispose of three votes in the assembly of the province. As this only consisted of seven members, the nobles counting as one, besides the deputies of six towns, he needed now only to gain a single vote to be secure of a majority, and to be in fact master of the States of Zeeland. Thus the dignity of the premier noble bestowed upon the son of William II. seemed destined to pave the way to a speedy re-establishment of the stadtholdership in Zeeland. The clergy of Middleburg were already proposing in their consistory to send a deputation to the provincial States representing the necessity of electing a stadtholder, and

threatened to address their remonstrances to the people if they did not obtain a favourable decision. The opposition of a few deputies sufficed, indeed, to check this measure, but a change of government was none the less evidently impending.

To enable her grandson to profit by any such change, the Princess-Dowager determined to bring his minority to an end, dispensing with the intervention of the States of Holland, and paying no attention to the authority over his education which still belonged to them. Having obtained the consent of his two uncles, the King of England and the Elector of Brandenburg, she solemnly delivered to him the deed by which he was declared of age, and notified it to the States-General and the States of Holland. The Grand Pensionary was inclined to consider this determination as the signal for a rupture, notwithstanding the pacific declarations to which the Princess-Dowager was careful to have recourse. The bold stroke so successfully played by the Prince of Orange seemed moreover to be a sufficient announcement of his intention of assuming the part of pretender. De Witt saw that he had been fooled by a boy of eighteen, whose apparent docility had deceived him. His anxiety is betrayed in his letters. Writing to Valkenier, the burgomaster of Amsterdam, he alludes covertly to 'the necessity of concerting measures for the preservation of such dearly purchased freedom.'

While this change of scene was being so rapidly accomplished, the internal rivalries and jealousies in the Assembly of the States of Holland were being with difficulty restrained by the authority of the Grand Pensionary, which was enfeebled rather than strengthened by his long exercise of power. De Witt was no longer the undisputed ruler of the assembly. 'From the advices I have lately received,' writes the French ambassador Pomponne, 'I gather that there is some secret agitation at work against the Grand Pensionary, and that there is some talk of requiring an account of his administration, even of the 12,000 florins which he receives yearly for secret service.' 'The bottom of all this,' writes the English ambassador Temple, 'is the same with that of all popular humours; that is, a design in the leaders to change the scene, that so

those who have been long employed may make room for those who have been long out.'

The adversaries of John de Witt demanded that the conduct of foreign affairs should be confided to another minister, and that his office should be divided on account of the over-pressure of work which he had to attend to. This attack was too direct to be successful, and the proposal fell to the ground. It was by more circuitous methods that it was now resolved to strike a blow at his authority. Thus he was indirectly censured in the matter of 'The Political Maxims of Holland,' a work to which he had anonymously contributed, by himself composing two chapters. He had granted the concession to the publisher for a term of fifteen years, at the close of a sitting, at a moment when almost all the members of the assembly were absent. Five months afterwards, on the demand of several deputies, the assembly resolved to withdraw the concession as having been obtained under a misapprehension. The book, in which the author, Delacourt, set forth the policy of the republican party, in terms exceeding all limits of controversy and apparently intended to break all the ties which bound Holland to the other provinces, was prohibited under penalty of a fine of 600 florins, 'as injurious, calumnious, and detestable in many parts.' These blows dealt to De Witt were liable to be the more dangerous as they came from some of those who had long been considered his avowed partisans. While some faithful friends still remained to him, such as his kinsmen Vivien, Pensionary of Dordrecht, and De Groot, Pensionary of Rotterdam, the son of the celebrated Grotius, others, such as Beverningh, Fagel, and Van Beuningen, set the example of defection.

Beverningh had drawn nearer to the Orange party after his resignation of the office of treasurer-general during the second English war. The advances of the Grand Pensionary, who invited him to bring his wife to spend some days at the Hague and kept up a constant correspondence with him, had, it is true, induced him to undertake the negotiations which ended in the treaties of Breda and Aix-la-Chapelle; but De Witt had been unable to persuade him to return to England

and accept the embassy extraordinary that had been offered to him. In the following year Beverningh had almost yielded to the application of the Prince of Orange, who urged him to enter his service and undertake the management of his finances, promising him a salary of six or eight thousand crowns. 'Those who know,' writes Wicquefort, 'on what terms he has lived for some time with the First Minister did not doubt that he would finally pledge himself at the dinner which he gave last Saturday to the Prince and to Messieurs de Witt and Van Ghent in his house near Leyden. But it turned out quite otherwise, for the Prince having ridden thither in order to be able to converse with him before the arrival of the others, Monsieur Beverningh spoke out and refused to undertake that office.'

However that might be, the advances that had been made to him by the heir of the House of Orange had not been in vain. They deprived the republican party of one of its boldest champions, and one who had seemed irrevocably pledged to it by the part he had taken in the Act of Exclusion in 1653. Beverningh's disinterestedness, however, was greater than his ambition, and he never sought to take advantage of the restoration of the stadtholdership to turn to his own profit the favour which he had acquired with the Prince of Orange. Jealous of his independence, and having, in her days of trial, rendered all the services required of him to his country, he retired into private life after he had negotiated and concluded the treaty of Nimeguen in 1678, and from that time till his death took no further part in public affairs.

Fagel also, the pensionary of Haarlem, who had been the prime mover of the Perpetual Edict, and who had suggested, or rather forced it upon De Witt, declared himself openly in opposition to the Grand Pensionary. Even Noortwijk, one of the most avowed adversaries of the Orange party—'the only man besides De Witt,' says St. Evremond, 'who ventured boldly to pronounce the word "republic"'—was dissatisfied because the Grand Pensionary had prevented the admission of his second son-in-law among the nobles who sat in the Assembly of the States.

Worse than all, Van Beuningen, until now the confidant

of John de Witt, was seeking to become his rival. 'I am much mistaken if I have not discovered some estrangement between them, which arises perhaps from the jealousy usually inspired by divided authority,' writes Pomponne in February 1669. So far back as the year 1667, when he was still ambassador in ordinary in France, Van Beuningen had asked De Witt to associate him with himself in power. The Grand Pensionary had evaded the suggestion, and their friendship had cooled. 'A plurality of Cæsars cannot live together,' writes D'Estrades. According to the ambassador's report, Van Beuningen, supported by Beverningh, had canvassed the deputies of Holland to obtain a vacant troop of horse for a relation of his who was the lieutenant, while the Grand Pensionary supported the candidature of one of his own nephews. 'Their solicitations,' continued D'Estrades, 'were carried so far, that the deputies who were already pledged to De Witt let him know that they could not keep their word, as justice required that the troop should be given to the lieutenant.' Van Beuningen, on the other hand, at the risk of compromising the alliances of the republic, opposed the definitive nomination of Peter de Groot, the Grand Pensionary's most intimate friend, to the embassy at Stockholm. His conduct was the less excusable that he ought to have shown some gratitude to the son for the benefits that he had received from the father, the celebrated Grotius, who, when exiled from the United Provinces and acting as ambassador from Christina, Queen of Sweden, to the court of France, had been the patron of his younger days, he having gone through his apprenticeship in diplomacy with Grotius in Paris.

By now enrolling himself amongst the malcontents, Van Beuningen prepared the way for the new engagements he was about to enter into with the Orange party, to which indeed he was attached by the opinions he had professed on his first entrance into public life. But he was not destined to profit long by the success of a cause which he served with all the impetuous ardour of a neophyte. Entrusted, after the restoration of William III., with a fresh embassy to England, he opposed the warlike policy of the Prince of Orange after

the rupture of the peace of Nimeguen by Louis XIV., and thus fell into disgrace. The irregularities of his private life deprived him of that consideration which might have made the trials of public life more easy to endure at the close of his career. His pleasure-loving tastes caused him to maintain a little seraglio in his house at Blyenburg, adjoining one of the suburbs of the Hague, and late in life he married one of his mistresses, Johanna Bartolotti van den Heuvel. The commercial undertakings in which he had embarked did not answer his expectations, and his pecuniary losses completed the almost total wreck of his mind. He survived himself in a melancholy old age which could not have been predicted from his famous embassies, and died in 1693.

De Witt could not conceal from himself the danger of the rivalries and intrigues which threatened his power. He endeavoured to foil them by his moderation. Far from showing towards Van Beuningen any resentment for the hostility he had shown towards him, he offered him his services to assist in his election as burgomaster of Amsterdam; and, anxious to give no handle for the accusations of abuse of power brought against him, he left the appointment to vacant offices one after another in the hands of his enemies, in the hope of satisfying them. Thus the government of Sluys was given to La Leek, whose younger brother, Van Odyk, was the principal agent of the Orange party; and that of Bois-le-Duc to Kirkpatrick, the oldest infantry colonel in the army, and especially recommended by the Prince of Orange. De Witt abstained from opposing to their candidature the name of Major-General Wurtz, who possessed his entire confidence, and whose appointment would have been in his own interest.

He acted in the same manner with regard to the election of a new chief representative of the nobility of Holland in place of Wimmenum, who held also the important offices of president of the councillor-deputies of Holland and bailiff and dyckgrave—or superintendent of roads and bridges—of Rhyndlandt, the combined salaries of which amounted to 20,000 florins. An equitable compromise was arrived at through the intervention of the Grand Pensionary. De Witt satisfied

himself with obtaining the appointment to the presidency of the board of councillor-deputies for Boetselaar, Baron of Asperen, who before entering the service of the Prince of Orange appeared to favour the republican party, and put forward no claim to the other vacant post which was bestowed upon a candidate pledged to the party in opposition. Having, by this policy of compromise, preserved unimpaired the union of the States of Holland, he turned it to profit, in order to persuade them to lose no time in taking measures to guard against any fresh attempts on the part of the Prince of Orange. Fearing that the assumption by the latter of the functions of premier noble might be the prelude to the re-establishment of the stadtholdership in Zealand, the Grand Pensionary induced the States of Holland to pass a resolution, by which their deputies in the States-General were instructed to demand the addition of an article to the rules of the Council of State, prohibiting the admission of any stadtholder. The two provinces of Friesland and Groningen, who had kept the young Prince Henry Casimir of Nassau as their stadtholder, opposed a motion which they considered prejudicial to their interests and an attack upon the right of the provinces which might wish to restore the stadtholdership. The manifesto which they published did not, however, deter the States of Holland from declaring that they would allow no stadtholder to take his seat in the Council of State without the preliminary consent of the confederated provinces.

This skilful show of firmness was successful. It had been made easy by the harmony which De Witt had been careful to cultivate in the province. With this object in view, he had happily terminated a dispute which had long divided North and South Holland concerning the share to be paid of the provincial subsidies, which he caused to be lowered from twenty to eighteen and a quarter per cent. for North Holland. Having no fear of dissensions in their own assembly, the States of Holland were able to insure respect for the integrity of their sovereign power, in the execution of the fiscal and domain laws applicable to the Prince of Orange. When once his partisans had recognised the impossibility of overcoming

the resistance offered to them, they understood that a conciliatory policy would be of more service to the Prince, and changed their tactics accordingly. They renounced the idea of his election as Stadtholder of Zealand, and determined in the first place to get him admitted into the Council of State.

The Princess-Dowager, well used to dissimulation, was the first to adopt these views, and soon overcame the doubts of her grandson. The King of England shared her opinion, and his minister Arlington writes to Sir William Temple: 'His Majesty inclines much to the Prince's contenting himself with a little; and such a little, if it be so, as you have specified, rather than run the hazard of losing the whole.' This plan of campaign could not, however, be successful so long as the unanimous consent of the provinces had not been obtained to the Act of Harmony, which had imposed as the condition of the admission of the Prince of Orange to the Council of State, the division of the civil and military offices, that of captain-general and that of stadtholder. As yet the three provinces most devoted to the House of Orange, Zealand, Friesland, and Groningen, had refused their assent. To induce them to give way it was necessary first to reconcile Holland and Zealand.

Assured of the co-operation of the Princess-Dowager, De Witt set to work with skill and perseverance at this labour of reconciliation. He took advantage of the rivalry that had declared itself between William van Odyk, the Prince's substitute in his capacity of premier noble, and Peter de Huybert, Councillor Pensionary of Zealand, who could not forgive the Prince of Orange for not having made choice of him as his delegate. Having won his good-will by well-chosen attentions, De Witt prepared the way for an agreement between the two provinces by bringing to an end the discussions that had been raised on the subject of their courts of justice—the provincial court and the grand council, which were common to both provinces. Their constant dissension had lately been revived over the choice of a president for the provincial court when the turn of presidency fell to Zealand.¹ In order not to lose

¹ The presidency was allowed three times in succession to Holland before reverting to Zealand.

it, Holland had left the post vacant, causing the office to be filled temporarily by the senior councillor, Dorp de Maasdam. Unable longer to postpone a definitive appointment, they now demanded a change of system by which a compromise might be effected.

The two provinces agreed that each should have its separate provincial court, but preserved the grand council for both, to sit in appeal in civil cases, and as a court of error in criminal proceedings. The States of Holland took advantage of this arrangement to dispose of the presidency of the provincial court in favour of Pauw, Lord of Bennebroeck, who had been recommended to them by the order of nobles, and who did little to justify in after days this mark of their confidence. The measures mutually agreed to for the reorganisation of the courts of justice paved the way for an agreement in politics. While signifying their assent to them, the States of Zealand, by the advice of the Princess-Dowager, themselves proposed to the States of Holland the division of the functions of stadtholder and captain-general, in consideration of the immediate admission of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State. They thus subscribed the Act of Harmony, which had been kept for two years in suspense by their opposition.

Anxious not to leave their task incomplete, the States of Holland undertook the conversion of the two last dissentient provinces, Friesland and Groningen. The latter resisted, not choosing to shut out their stadtholder in the future from the post of captain-general. They reproached the Princess-Dowager for having deserted their cause, and one of the deputies of Friesland made himself the mouthpiece of their remonstrances in the following words: 'Everyone to whom I have spoken,' he writes, 'expresses the greatest astonishment that the Prince should seem thus inclined to allow a project which formerly was considered so iniquitous; and your Highness, who has so enlightened a mind, may easily judge, if by consenting to this the two provinces of Friesland and Groningen would not be committing a flagrant injustice, and if your Highness can with propriety favour a business so prejudicial

to the Prince, your grandson, and which you formerly so strenuously opposed.'

The union of Zealand with Holland, however, disheartened the provinces of Friesland and Groningen. They gave way, and after long hesitation, at the beginning of the following year, March 1670, gave their consent in writing to the division of the two offices. The States-General immediately demanded that the necessary measures should be taken to arrange without delay for the admission of the Prince into the Council of State. The condition upon which his entrance had been made to depend, had in fact been fulfilled. The States of Holland had now obtained the satisfaction they required, and there seemed nothing left but for themselves to fulfil their engagements. The work of pacification which they had undertaken appeared to be accomplished, but they were about to imperil and destroy it while weakening their own power by rashly provoked dissensions.

The Grand Pensionary had too easily persuaded himself that he might continue to depend upon their indissoluble union, although he had himself foretold its fragility. 'I find so much weakness in our own body, even at this favourable time,' he wrote to a friend the day after the passing of the Perpetual Edict, 'that I do not know what might happen in case of dissensions, nor what blows might fall on honest men.' He was not sufficiently on his guard against this danger. When the dissentient provinces had all been brought round to the Act of Harmony, instead of putting it at once into execution by securing the immediate admission of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State and thus giving him the satisfaction that had been promised, he allowed free course to discussions skilfully turned to account by his enemies, and to which he only put an end after too much delay. By them the States of Holland were divided into two opposite factions, unforeseen allies were secured to the Orange party, and the republicans were disarmed.

On the day when the States-General registered the consent of the last provinces that had opposed the Act of Harmony, the resolution sanctioning this convention and admitting the

Prince of Orange into the Council of State was suddenly thrown into uncertainty. Before putting it to the vote De Werkendam, the deputy of Holland who was presiding over the Assembly, required that it should be submitted to the provincial states, and the latter decided that it was necessary to proceed to a fresh debate. The next day the deputies of the States-General expressed their surprise, and protested against any adjournment. The deputies of Holland represented to them that there still remained to be settled some questions not yet decided; and the Grand Pensionary, to induce them to have patience, assured them that the States of the province, in order to hasten the passing of the motion, had already referred it to a small committee of the Assembly composed of Boutermantel, one of the deputies of Amsterdam, who drew up a daily report of the sittings, the manuscript of which has fortunately been preserved,¹ Fagel, pensionary of Haarlem, and the deputy of the town of Hoorn. They were instructed to consult with the members representing Holland in the Council of State.

They had to determine the allowance, the seat, and the vote to be granted to the Prince. The amount of the allowance, which some wished to make as high as 100,000 florins, was by others reduced to 25,000 florins. The next question was whether the Prince was to sit in the arm-chair in which his ancestors had taken their places as stadtholders of the province, or whether he should content himself with an ordinary chair. Finally, the right of voting in the Council of State gave rise to divisions of opinion still less easy to reconcile. The Prince's champions claimed for him a decisive vote, whilst his adversaries wished to allow him only the right of discussion.

The Prince of Orange believed himself to be secure of the vote. The Grand Pensionary had long before assured him, 'that this was his wish, and that he was persuaded it was that of his masters.' But when the Prince reminded him of his engagement, De Witt replied that matters had greatly

¹ This MS., from which all the details of this account are taken, belongs now to the Roogards collection at Utrecht.

changed since then, as the Prince had had himself proclaimed premier noble of Zealand in a manner of which the States of Holland could not approve. He thus imprudently renewed differences which had seemed settled, and which it was important to avoid.

The contest began in the first debate in the assembly of the States of Holland, and the concord which had hitherto made them masters of the government of the United Provinces was irretrievably destroyed. The deputies of Dordrecht, represented by the Pensionary Vivien, objected acrimoniously to the excess of power which the office of Councillor of State would give to the Prince of Orange, combined with his functions as premier noble of Zealand, and argued the necessity of taking some security. Haarlem, on the contrary, represented by its Pensionary Fagel and supported by the deputies of Alkmaar and Enckhuyzen, was strongly opposed to any show of want of confidence, and declared that a refusal to comply with the terms stipulated in the Act of Harmony in their integrity would call into question again the Perpetual Edict. The other members of the Assembly seemed disposed to try to come to an agreement.

The next day, March 27, 1670, the debate was renewed on the report of the committee. The Prince's allowance, fixed at 60,000 florins, was readily agreed to, at least provisionally. On the other hand, his partisans ceased to claim for him the right to occupy the seat of the stadtholders, and contented themselves with having a place of honour reserved for him. But the question of whether he was to vote proved an obstacle to a good understanding. The report was in favour of it, but this proposal met with obstinate opposition. The nobles argued as follows: The vote allowed to the Prince, they said, would give too much power in the Council of State to Zealand, who would thus dispose of a double vote: that of her ordinary deputy and that of the Prince, who by his appointment as premier noble of that province had become their official representative. The estates belonging to the Prince in the Country of the Generality, of which the council of State was the administrator, the influence given to him by his birth, his

relationship with the King of England and to the Elector of Brandenburg, appeared so many reasons for granting him for the present only limited authority. The majority of the Assembly seemed to agree with this opinion. Three towns only declared themselves against it; these were Haarlem, Alckmaar, and Enckhuyzen. Haarlem declared it impossible to allow the Prince to sit in the Council of State 'as a figure of straw or cardboard,' and not succeeding in gaining their cause, demanded that the deputies should ask instructions from the town councils.

This adjournment, which was intended to be favourable to the interests of the Prince of Orange, appeared, however, to him to offer a fresh obstacle to his hopes. In his impatience he wished to take advantage at once of the prorogation of the States of Holland to persuade the States-General to decide the question by a majority of votes, saying to his confidants 'that he should take his seat in the Council of State then or never.' The deputies even of the provinces the most devoted to him refused to proceed without receiving orders from the States of which they were only the delegates, and they were aware also that the unanimous consent of all the provinces was necessary for the admission of the Prince. One of the deputies of Guelders who had always been noted for his attachment to the Prince's party went even so far as to say, 'that if a majority of the provinces would suffice to admit the Prince into the Council of State, the vote of one alone might be sufficient to turn him out.'

Although they did not choose to join in the false step recommended to the Prince by his flatterers, the other provinces were none the less determined not to allow Holland any longer to deny him the prerogatives of his office, and accordingly refused to pay any attention to the representations addressed by De Witt to the Councillor-Pensionary of Zealand, and to Dykveldt, the deputy of Utrecht. They were still further encouraged by the disunion which continued to show itself among the deputies of Holland since the prorogation, and by the failure of the offers of a compromise sent by De Witt to Fagel suggesting, but in vain, that the Prince of Orange

should be admitted at once into the Council of State, provided that the question of the vote should be reserved.

In the next Assembly of the States of Holland, which was held three weeks after their last sitting, the Orange party saw with satisfaction that fresh forces were at its disposal by the aid of which victory was secure. Besides the town of Leyden, they had gained to their cause that of Amsterdam, whose defection the Grand Pensionary had vainly endeavoured to prevent by addressing an urgent appeal to the burgomaster Van Graeff. Amsterdam was at present entirely under the guidance of Van Beuningen, who from hostility to De Witt had become reconciled to the Prince of Orange. When called upon for an opinion that town accordingly joined with Haarlem, whose Pensionary, Fagel, was disposed to assume the position of chief of a party. The deputies of Amsterdam, therefore, supporting the vehement protestations of Fagel, and obeying the instructions given to them by the magistrates of the town, declared 'that the Prince of Orange, having no other authority than that of Councillor of State, could not be placed in a position inferior to that of the other members of the Council, and they hinted that the opinion of a city which was the principal strength of Holland ought to be allowed great weight.'

Their intervention made the debate still more stormy. It irritated the deputies of Delft, Dordrecht, and Rotterdam, who, giving free vent to the hostility they had until now kept within bounds, disputed the right of the Prince of Orange, before the completion of his twenty-second year, not merely to possess a vote, but even to offer an opinion. They asserted that the Prince ought to be admitted to the council only as a learner, and must begin by listening before he could learn anything. The president of the councillor-deputies, D'Asperen, summed up in these laconic terms the programme opposed to that of the deputies of Haarlem and Amsterdam. 'The less is given,' he said, 'the better it will be.' De Groot, pensionary of Rotterdam, in a direct attack upon the deputies of Amsterdam, distinguished himself by the vehemence of his opposition, and required that the Prince of Orange should first offer his

resignation as premier noble of Zealand. He pleaded the precautions which ought to be taken against his too great powers, recalled to the deputies of Amsterdam the danger which the freedom of their city had incurred from the last stadtholder, William II., reproaching them with having forgotten it, and ended by declaring that he could not comprehend that so much eagerness should be shown to destroy the foundations of liberty. The pretensions of Amsterdam to the upper hand were indignantly denounced, and threats of constraining her to obedience were not spared.

Shaken by these divisions, the deputies of the northern towns, who had until now appeared generally faithful to the republican party, refused to pronounce an opinion before receiving the instructions which they now thought indispensable. In vain De Witt, taking part in the debate with a view to pacifying it, asked to be allowed to make fresh proposals for an agreement. The deputies of Amsterdam refused to allow him to bring them forward, and a new adjournment was voted. The Grand Pensionary took advantage of it to attempt a tardy reconciliation. With this object he endeavoured to renew amicable relations with Van Beuningen, and promised to remain neutral between the two contending parties. Van Beuningen, satisfied with this promise, which he considered as an advance, tried to overcome the resistance of the principal representatives of the republican party who still refused to grant a vote to the Prince of Orange.

As soon as the States of Holland were reassembled, May 16, 1670, De Witt, having ascertained in the first day's sitting that disunion still prevailed, took upon himself to initiate a project of conciliation which might satisfy the Orange party and at the same time reassure the republicans. Having succeeded in arriving at an understanding, not only with Van Beuningen but also with Fagel, he called upon the deputies of Amsterdam and informed them of what he proposed, to which they agreed. After an interval of four days, the second sitting was opened under happier auspices. De Witt reminded the Assembly authoritatively that it was his duty to establish harmony among all the members of the

Assembly, declared that in conforming with this he had drawn up a project for which he hoped to gain acceptance, and requested permission to read it. 'If it is thought convenient,' he said, 'I am ready to explain it, if not I am prepared to tear it up.' The Assembly, weary of the struggle and hoping to find at last a compromise that might put an end to it, eagerly acceded to his request.

According to the proposal read by De Witt a vote was to be allowed to the Prince of Orange; but, from doubts of his uncles, the King of England and the Elector of Brandenburg, the States were asked to forbid his sitting in the council whenever the debates might concern himself or his relations. He was to be debarred also from voting upon the assessment or partition of taxes in the Countries of the Generality, since the exemption from all taxation enjoyed by the Prince of Orange on his estates forbade him to take any share in deliberations concerning imposts to which he was not subject. To these two restrictions De Witt had added a third, which was intended to secure the consent of the republican party to the vote. This was an engagement to be taken by the States of Holland to dispose, by unanimity only, of the office of captain-and admiral-general, which, by the terms of the Act of Harmony, was to remain vacant until the son of William II. had completed his twenty-second year. The satisfaction demanded for the Prince of Orange by his partisans was thus accorded on condition of a guarantee being taken for the future. Their rival pretensions thus satisfied, the deputies of the States hastened to approve the project. 'There were cries of joy,' writes an eye-witness of the scene, 'as if a great victory had been announced, and I saw that there were still mutual friendship and pacific sentiments among the members of the Assembly.'

Unfortunately a few deputies had insisted upon the consent of the town councils being obtained, and the most violent partisans of the Prince of Orange took advantage of this to delay the agreement which had seemed concluded. The opposition of Amsterdam prevented all compromise. Hop the pensionary, and the burgomaster Valkenier, in order to arouse among

the Orange party distrust of Van Beuningen, whom they hoped thus to supplant, proved absolutely intractable. Hop, giving way to his enmity for De Witt, declared in private 'that he would rather see Holland in subjection to the Prince than to a servant of the provincial states'—meaning by that allusion the Grand Pensionary—and he added that 'if it was necessary to be so governed, he would rather take for his master the Bishop of Münster, Catholic though he might be.' Valkenier on his side, thinking himself secure of getting his opinion shared by the other burgomasters, who desired to keep in the background the magistrates of the towns, represented to them that it was a point of honour to keep to the resolution which had been taken to grant a vote to the Prince of Orange, without taking other questions into account. He was only feebly opposed. The burgomasters, by a majority of votes, rejected the compromise proposed by the Grand Pensionary, and enjoined the deputies representing Amsterdam in the Assembly of the States to pay no attention to it. The pensionary Hop, on the suggestion of Valkenier, hastened to send off by express that same night a copy of this resolution to Fagel, the pensionary of Haarlem, who communicated it to the burgomaster of Leyden. The latter informed De Witt, who gave notice to his friends of the fresh difficulties which he foresaw for the next day's sitting.

His expectations were not deceived. Notwithstanding the agreement that had apparently been arrived at, Amsterdam and Haarlem, supported by two other towns, Enckhuyzen and Schoonhoven, declared that they adhered to their original vote, and would admit of no concession. At the second ballot they still maintained their obstinate resistance, while the nobles and the deputies of Dordrecht and Rotterdam seemed on their part disposed to withdraw the consent which they had given to the vote to be granted to the Prince. The urgent intervention of the Grand Pensionary, however, prevented the abandonment of the scheme of compromise, and a third ballot was called for, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour.

De Witt, always master of himself, endeavoured to put an end to the debate by declaring that the restrictions, which

were but slight, to be laid on the Prince's powers as councillor of State were in conformity with common law, and could not be seriously disputed. He represented that the difference was, therefore, only as to the concession required by the republican party, and the object of which was to submit finally the appointment of a captain-general to the unanimous vote of the States of Holland. De Witt appealed to the resolutions which might serve as precedents to this arrangement, and pointed out the dangers which might ensue from so important an appointment if it were not subject to a general agreement. He solemnly reminded them that, if this guarantee could not be obtained, 'the resolution of the States must be left to the grace of God.' The four dissentient towns still refused to be convinced and join in the vote. To avoid the appearance of yielding, Fagel called for the reading of his protest against the Perpetual Edict, which he declared to be revocable, failing the admission of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State. De Groot reminded him of the share he had had in the passing of that Edict, and accused him of desiring to perjure himself. Van Beuningen interfered to put an end to the altercation. It was now an hour after midnight, and the Grand Pensionary obtained the adjournment of the final vote till the next day, in the hope that the night might bring wisdom.

The Prince of Orange was impatiently awaiting the resolution of the Assembly. He had passed the evening at the house of his confidant, Van Odyk, and had sent his servants to the neighbourhood of the Hall of Assembly that he might be informed of their resolution without delay. He was eager to obtain the satisfaction promised to him, and when he learned that there was still some risk of it being postponed he appeared disposed to put a stop to the dangerous zeal of his more ardent partisans. Either by his advice or of their own accord they yielded to a better impulse, and giving up the idea of holding in check the majority of the Assembly, contented themselves with making certain reservations which the deputation of Amsterdam were not authorised to renounce.

On Saturday, May 24, 1670, the resolution which for two months had kept the States of Holland at variance among themselves was voted, at least conditionally. To render it final it was only necessary that the towns which had hitherto held back, should now give their consent or even should be satisfied to make no protest before the end of the month. The town of Haarlem was the first to declare itself a few days afterwards; but stipulated at the same time that it would not be bound by its promise if the admittance of the Prince into the Council of State were retarded on account of negotiations with the other provinces. De Witt hastened to set this example before the three other towns which had joined with Haarlem: Amsterdam, Enckhuyzen, and Schoonhoven, making an urgent final appeal to which they yielded, and the unanimous consent of the Assembly was thus obtained.

The Grand Pensionary himself undertook to communicate it to the Prince of Orange, and introduced him into the committee of the councillor-deputies of Holland, before whom he had to take oath, according to custom, that he had not canvassed or bribed any member of the States in order to obtain his seat. At the same time De Witt hastened to submit to the States-General the scheme of conciliation voted by the States of Holland. The deputies of Utrecht and Overijssel not having received authority from the States of their provinces, he urgently appealed to them to obtain the necessary instructions, and without waiting for the reception of these, having obtained their conditional assent, he called upon the States-General to declare themselves at once. Renswoude, the deputy of Utrecht, not venturing to give a decision without directions from the States of his province, waited until the last hour of his week's term of presidency ended at one o'clock in the afternoon, and then yielded his seat to the deputy of Zealand, who was to succeed him, and who declared the Prince of Orange to be admitted to the Council of State, in accordance with the motion of the States of Holland.

As soon as the resolution had been passed, on Saturday, May 31, at eleven o'clock in the morning, Ruysch, the secretary of the States-General, went to fetch the Prince, accom-

panied by three deputies of Holland, Zealand, and Groningen, who had been instructed to introduce him. The Prince, 'taking care to be ahead of them,' that he might enter the council room first, advanced and took his seat in a velvet arm-chair reserved for him, opposite to that belonging to the Stadtholder of Friesland, who was still too young to take his place there. He listened to the reading of his commission, took the oath of fidelity, and expressed his thanks to the States-General in a few civil words that were well received. As soon as the Assembly rose, two deputies from the Council of State conducted him back to his palace with the same ceremony. The entrance of the Prince into the Council of State with a vote, was a victory which he had the more reason to be proud of, since it had not been undisputed. 'This first step which his friends had made him take,' writes Pomponne, 'was considered by them as one that might lead him to all that they desired to attempt for his future elevation.' The republican party on the other hand had lost the advantages which might have enabled it to turn this appointment to account for a political reconciliation. Once secure of the consent of all the provinces to the separation of the offices of stadtholder and captain-general, De Witt had been imprudent enough to allow differences to arise which he ought to have guarded against at any price. From the moment when the Act of Harmony had made the civil and military officers incompatible, on condition of the admission of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State, the privileges of his new functions ought to have been allowed to him without diminution. To dispute his right to the vote without which his powers would have been inferior to those of the other members of the council, was to take away with one hand what had been given with the other. No doubt the Prince of Orange, by having himself proclaimed premier noble of Zealand without the sanction of the States of Holland, had given plain proof of his impatient ambition, and justly aroused suspicions by his conduct; but when the restoration of an amicable understanding might have been affected by his admittance into the council of State, advantage ought to have been

taken of the opportunity to conclude a treaty of peace with the Orange party. By failing to preserve entire that agreement in the States of Holland upon which depended the stability of the republican government, De Witt had permitted the breach to be reopened by which the son of William II. was soon to arrive at the chief power. 'I greatly regret to think,' writes Van Asperen, the president of the councillor-deputies, 'that we have laid the first stone of an edifice which menaces both our liberties and our persons.'

Notwithstanding all semblance of concord, the rivalry of the two parties was hardly even suspended by a truce. The distrust of the Prince's adversaries became every day more marked, while his partisans, eager to worship the rising sun, put forth constantly increasing demands. The Council of State would not permit the titles of acts or despatches to be worded, 'His Highness and the Council,' and thus reproduce the formula which had been in use when the Princes of Orange sat as stadtholders. William, on the other hand, would not give up the hope of recovering the privileges of his ancestors. Taking advantage of the absence of the Grand Pensionary, who had been summoned to Groningen to settle the differences in that province, he claimed the right to a seat in the States-General, on the occasion of the report given by Wassenaar van Obdam of his interview with the King of France at Dunkirk. His demand was based upon the terms of his commission as Councillor of State, which was exactly similar to that held by his father, and which bore, 'that being summoned to appear in the Assembly of the States-General as well as in that of the Council of State, he was empowered to sit at their meetings.'

Six provinces were in favour of the right of sitting, but the deputies of Holland opposed it until the States of their province, which were not at this moment assembled, should have been consulted. 'We are at a loss,' writes Van Asperen to De Witt, 'not knowing what your opinion may be.' The Grand Pensionary hastened his return, and by his intervention prevented a fresh conflict. He carried a motion that the Prince of Orange should be admitted to the States-General

only in his capacity as councillor of State and when the council was summoned, but had no right to take advantage of the wording of the commission that he had received. It had in fact been copied inadvertently from that of William II., to whom the right to act had been allowed because, at the time when the late Prince of Orange had received it, he had succeeded to the offices of his father Frederick Henry, as stadtholder and captain-general.

'I learn from your letter,' writes De Witt to his brother, 'the insolent attempt that has been made to introduce the Prince of Orange by surprise into the Assembly of the States-General, on the most ill-founded reason possible. The business seems now to have been entirely put an end to, and nobody, excepting the deputies of Zealand, has ventured to uphold it against me, so that I do not imagine that the provinces are inclined to come to blows with Holland, neither do I observe that the deputies of Holland have exhibited any weakness which might lead to divisions.' Three weeks later the Grand Pensionary informs his cousin John de Wit, ambassador in Poland, 'that none of the deputies of Holland, not even those of Haarlem, having appeared disposed to support the unjustifiable demand that had been made in favour of the Prince, there was reason to believe that no more would be heard of the matter.'

The entrance of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State, far from serving to conciliate matters, had thus only been the forerunner to renewed hostilities. The influence that De Witt had flattered himself that he should exercise, by making the heir of the former stadtholders the ward of the States of Holland, had completely disappointed his expectations, and he saw himself forced to abandon his attempted task without obtaining any advantage from it. When once he had been appointed Councillor of State, and had thus entered upon public life, William could not continue in subjection even to the nominal rule of the commissioners entrusted with his education. Moreover, since his guardian had declared him of age, he considered himself released from all tutelage. He had not merely dismissed his tutor, sending him a message by his valet that he required no further services from him, but

he kept equally at a distance the governor appointed for him by the States, only seeing him at meal-times, and so annoyed him by the marks of his dislike that Van Ghent, who at present filled that post, was impatient to resign it. The dignity of the States of Holland was only too deeply compromised already; they could not allow it to be trifled with any longer, and they themselves appealed to the appointment of the Prince as Councillor of State as a reason for putting an end to the authority exercised towards him by the deputies charged with his education. De Witt had acquitted himself of this task with exemplary fidelity, but had left all the profit of it to the heir of the House of Orange, having found in it for himself only irretrievable failure.

The intervention of foreign powers, which did not fail to fan the flames, made the internal divisions still more dangerous. They encouraged this domestic strife with an ardour that threatened the independence of the United Provinces. At the moment when the King of France was rejecting the advances of the States-General towards a reconciliation, and while the King of England appeared to be losing interest in the Triple Alliance and only seeking for pretexts to quarrel with his new allies, Louis XIV. and Charles II. were both making advances to the Prince of Orange from which they had hitherto abstained, and seemed thus to desire to engage him in their cause against that of the republic.

One of the constant correspondents of the Grand Pensionary, Bampfild, pointed out to him this danger, at the same time informing him of the intrigues carried on by the widow of Buat, the former agent of the Orange party, who had been concerned in a conspiracy with England, and whose condemnation had been insisted upon with such implacable severity by the Grand Pensionary. 'Madame Buat,' he writes, 'has gone to Holland secretly. She is a clever woman, envenomed against the government and particularly against your person. She has been seen every day in Paris by everyone of any consideration, both men and women, and as she was engaged in dangerous intrigues during the war with England, there is every human probability that she is carrying on some such now

with France in favour of the Prince of Orange. England will do all she can on her side, in an underhand manner, by secret advice and assistance, to restore the Prince's affairs entirely, and to place you under the necessity of permitting and aiding in this in spite of yourselves, as she believes her interest to be involved, and that the State may by this means be more speedily and more surely placed in subjection to her.'

These forebodings were well founded. Louis XIV. could not fail to encourage dissensions, with a view to weakening the republic, upon which he wished to revenge himself. The disputes to which the admittance of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State had given rise appeared to him to offer a favourable opportunity to take his part. The Prince had skilfully foreseen the feelings of the King of France, and indirectly made known to Pomponne how highly he should value a congratulatory message from the King his master upon the success that he had just obtained. Louis, too happy to satisfy his desires, charged his ambassador to inform him 'that he had not expressed his feelings towards him for fear that such a declaration might be made use of against him, adding that if the Prince of Orange thought otherwise he would not fail to write to him.' He sent him also his congratulations 'that he had thus gained a step soon to lead to other and higher ones, namely, to the establishment of the same authority that his ancestors had exercised in the State so justly and worthily.' In conformity with his instructions Pomponne paid a visit to the Prince of Orange, who received and returned it with every mark of pleasure, respect, and gratitude. He then handed to the ambassador a letter of thanks for the King of France. Louis hastened to reply, and the Prince immediately wrote again to assure him that he should always be ready 'to testify by his actions and by his zeal for the service of the King of France the same ardent attachment to the honour and interests of that kingdom which his ancestors had so often had the happiness of displaying.'

Charles II. on his side affected a crafty solicitude for the interests of his nephew, of which he had seemed to take little heed at the time of the Triple Alliance. To encourage the

hopes of the Orange party, he invited the Prince to England, pretexting for the journey his wish to make him a Knight of the Garter, and to settle the payment of his mother's dowry. He reckoned particularly on taking advantage of his nephew's visit to his court to make him an object of suspicion to the Grand Pensionary, and thus to take away all chance of success from the last attempt to reconcile the republicans and the Orange party.

This invitation was, in fact, certain to arouse De Witt's anxiety. The secret despatches which he had received from Paris had informed him of the treacherous intentions of the King of England towards the republic. The ambassador of the United Provinces at the court of France, according to his report to the States-General in the following year, had made known to the Grand Pensionary, in a letter written in cypher, that Charles had abandoned the cause of their High Mightinesses in consideration of the subsidies he had received. Rumpf, the secretary of embassy, also communicated his suspicions to De Witt, and warned him of the Prince of Orange's journey, 'as meriting consideration in such dark times of unpleasant conjuncture.' The hostile behaviour which the English Government had exhibited towards the republic since the conclusion of the Triple Alliance gave ground also for serious apprehension. Convinced that the King of England was making advances to the Prince of Orange only in consequence of an understanding with the King of France, the Grand Pensionary feared that a youth of twenty might be accessible to offers tempting his ambition, and might consent to become the accomplice of the enemy of his country in order to arrive at sovereign power.

This suspicion, which the Prince of Orange was afterwards so nobly to belie, seemed at the time justified by the dissimulation of which he had already given more than one proof, as well as by the intrigues of his partisans with Charles II. during the course of the late war between England and the United Provinces. Accordingly, when the Earl of Ossory, brother-in-law of the English minister, Arlington, and son-in-law of Beverwaert, the former Dutch ambassador in London,

came as Charles's envoy to the Hague to fetch the King's nephew, it was in vain that he endeavoured to persuade De Witt that Charles II. would become the protector of the republic if it would submit to be governed by the Prince of Orange. The Grand Pensionary appeared little disposed to pay attention to these advances, which he rightly judged to be not very sincere. He contented himself with putting forward the engagement entered into by the States to postpone all discussion as to the appointment of a captain-general until the Prince of Orange had completed his twenty-second year, and suggested that it would be better to allow him to go through an apprenticeship to public business in the Council of State.

De Witt did not depart from this reserve when the deputies of the provinces most favourable to William wished to take the opportunity of the notice given by the Prince to the States-General of his approaching departure, to demand that the Dutch ambassador in London should receive instructions to communicate all their negotiations to him. Through the intervention of the States of Holland he obtained a decision that no right of taking any part in the embassy should be allowed to the Prince, and the deputies of the States-General, who were commissioned to offer their good wishes to him on his journey, had to content themselves with requesting him, 'as a polite form,' to recommend the interests of the republic to the King, his uncle.

After giving a banquet and fête to the principal members of the government, the Prince of Orange embarked at Brill with a numerous suite, including many young nobles representing the chief families of the republic. From the moment of his arrival, November 11, 1670, the English court overwhelmed him with demonstrations intended to flatter and seduce him. Entertainments and banquets were offered to him. He was received with royal honours at Oxford and Cambridge, and his birthday was celebrated in state in London. Charles II. spared no attentions that might win him to his cause, but was not long in discovering, according to his own account, 'that he was too warmly Dutch and Protestant to leave any

hope of using him for the execution of his designs against the United Provinces.' 'The characters of the uncle and nephew,' writes Pomponne, 'were ill-suited for agreement. The King, free, outspoken, and easy, was entirely devoted to pleasure. The Prince, on the contrary, was naturally serious and reserved, averse from all appearance of vice, and, profiting by the advice of his grandmother, the Princess-Dowager of Orange, would take only such part in the King's diversions as civility required. His sobriety and reserve appeared to condemn them, and he thereby greatly pleased the English, who praised in him the tendencies opposed to those which they blamed in the King. But what especially moved them were his assiduity and punctuality in the performance of all his religious obligations and the exhibition of his great zeal for the Protestants. The popular favour which he thus conciliated might give the King of England reason to fear that his nephew would one day be a most dangerous enemy to his family.'

When informed of the attitude assumed by the Prince of Orange in London, Louis XIV. was careful to dissuade Charles II. from making confidences to his nephew, representing to him how dangerous it would be to make any revelations to a prince 'whose extreme youth gave reason to fear his indiscretion, and whose real sentiments appeared so uncertain.' Yielding to advice, which indeed coincided with his own impressions, the King of England allowed his nephew to return after a three months' stay without making known to him his treaty of alliance with Louis XIV.

The favourable reception of the Prince by his uncle had, however, sufficed to encourage his partisans, who accordingly undertook a new campaign. They imperiously demanded his restoration to the offices held by his ancestors, as a pledge to the King of England, whose tottering alliance might thus be strengthened. Van Beuningen, who had returned from London to the Hague, renewed the steps he had already taken to obtain his admittance into the Council of State. 'Nothing can exceed,' writes Pomponne, 'the good services rendered by Monsieur van Beuningen to the Prince of Orange.'

In his report to the States of his embassy to England, he certified that the United Provinces had experienced the best possible effects from the Prince's use in their favour of his credit with the King, adding that in future more regard ought to be had for his interests, and the passions of certain persons opposed to him should no longer be yielded to.'

The States-General received this communication favourably and desired to conform their conduct to it. They testified, therefore, their displeasure to the Grand Pensionary, who had for some time kept secret the letters written by the ambassador Boreel from England, pointing out the methods proper for strengthening the fidelity of Charles II. They learned their existence from some despatches addressed to themselves, and, suspecting that they referred to measures to be taken for the advancement of the Prince of Orange, they insisted that De Witt should lay the correspondence before them. To show the Grand Pensionary also their distrust of his conduct, they enjoined Boreel to send them copies of his letters at once with special orders to change nothing in them.

De Witt did not allow himself to be disturbed. He appeased all complaints, and by skill and firmness combined eluded all difficulties. Warned of the measures which Charles II. was preparing to take in favour of the Prince of Orange, he paid a visit to the Princess-Dowager. In this interview he succeeded in convincing her of the injury the Prince would do himself, even among his own friends, if he requested the interference of the King of England, in the face of the resolutions of Holland, which did not admit of recommendations by foreign sovereigns for any public office. In his opinion the Prince of Orange ought alone to owe the advantages that he might in future expect, to the affection of the States and their gratitude towards his House. The Princess-Dowager, not wishing to compromise the interests of her grandson, checked the impatience of his partisans, and the Grand Pensionary once more succeeded in his policy of resistance. It was all the more justified because concessions made to the King of England in favour of his nephew would not have destroyed the treaties between Charles II. and Louis XIV.

'If Monsieur de Witt,' writes Lionne to Pomponne, 'does bring about anything for the Prince's advantage, so much the better for the latter; but this forced concession will not effect any change in the King of England's mind as to the determinations already arrived at upon other and greater reasons.'

But the prudent conduct of the Grand Pensionary was powerless to dispel the now inevitable dangers of the home situation. The two parties remained in arms, ready to resume the offensive, but not under equal conditions. One was face to face with the difficulties, the jealousies, and the weaknesses which must be surmounted by those who would remain at the head of the government. The other was encouraged by the hopes and passions aroused by the struggle for power when victory seems at hand. Their rivalry once awakened was destroying the work of pacification which De Witt hoped to make lasting. It was the more disastrous as its revival occurred at the moment when a most dangerous coalition was about to menace the independence of the republic, and to deprive it of the advantages gained by the treaties through means of which the Grand Pensionary had hoped to secure it from all danger abroad. The formidable resentment of the King of France was the danger against which defence was now needed. Louis XIV. had never forgiven the United Provinces for having placed obstacles in the way of his attempted annexation of the Netherlands. Prevented by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle from making himself master of the Low Countries under penalty of a war with England and Sweden, he postponed the execution of his projects against Spain, and, calculating upon reducing her to the impossibility of resistance by first subduing her protectors, he determined to strike the first blow at those who had presumed to set bounds to his power. Another sentiment besides that of the offended conqueror contributed also to make Louis the enemy of the States-General. The absolute monarch, accustomed to the adulation of his subjects, was indignant with a republic which, by granting the right of asylum to liberty of the press, exposed him to attacks from the pamphlets and gazettes of the Hague,

Amsterdam, and Haarlem. Once before, on the occasion of a libel entitled, 'The Conversion of Madame de la Vallière,' published some years previously, Louis had expressed the great importance he attached 'to obtaining prompt satisfaction for such insolence.' Lionne was carelessly renewing his complaints and denouncing to Pomponne what he called 'this fishwives' licence.' De Witt was careful to reply that the States would not fail to punish the audacity and chastise the insolence of their news-writers, whenever anything was published in their gazettes prejudicial to the honour and reputation of a great king, the friend and ally of their country. He stated, indeed, that the person of whom complaint had been made, had been deprived for a month of his printing licence; still, however, seeking excuses and evasions. He declared that the gazettiers only copied what was sent to them from Paris, and that they were besides generally under the jurisdiction only of the municipal authorities, in their capacity of citizens of privileged towns. He added with much good sense, 'that he thought there was more inconvenience than advantage in requiring a closer examination of the accused writings, because in that case the magistrates might become responsible for the news published, if they did not institute prosecutions.' Pomponne was wise enough to advise the King of France to 'endure what he could not prevent,' but such submission was intolerable to the pride of Louis XIV., and his royal dignity seemed to him concerned in not leaving such offences unpunished.

The commercial rivalry between France and the republic rendered fresh conflicts inevitable. The court of France had not long followed the traditions of Cardinal Richelieu's policy, which had encouraged foreign trade in order to enrich the kingdom by the export of French products and open to them foreign markets. By the tariff which the Cardinal established, the inhabitants of the United Provinces who traded with France had a right to be treated as subjects of the King both on entering and leaving the country. This privilege gave a great impulse to the carrying trade, in which their principal wealth consisted. But when Colbert

had undertaken the creation of a merchant navy a different system obtained, and a duty of sixty sous per ton was imposed on all Dutch vessels leaving French ports. Thus attacked in their shipping interest, the United Provinces had developed a new source of prosperity in their manufactures, the quality and cheapness of their goods insuring them a large opening in France for their trade in cloth, linen, woollen stuffs, and ribbons, to the prejudice of the products of French origin.

Impatient to deprive them of these profits, Colbert took steps to enrich the home industries by a sudden change of system. After founding the great companies of the Baltic and the Mediterranean which were intended as rivals to Dutch commerce, he resolved to encourage French manufactures by protecting them against all competition. With this object, he in 1664 doubled the duty upon most foreign goods, and the tariff fixing the new imposts had just been succeeded by edicts which still further increased them. The piece of cloth was to pay forty livres instead of only twenty-eight, and products, such as refined sugar, were doubled in price by the duty. Such fiscal measures amounted to a prohibitory system, and were ruinous to the republic.

To put a stop to them, it was necessary to enter into negotiations, and consequently to fill up the vacancy in the embassy to France. This had continued since the death, in October 1668, of the ambassador Boreel, who indeed had long been of little use to his employers, and had held aloof from all negotiations during the last mission of Van Beuningen. The succession to his post had been offered to more than one person without finding acceptance, as the ill-will openly manifested by the court of France foreboded the failure of all negotiations. After vainly addressing themselves to one of the nobles of their Assembly, Daniel de Werkendam, to Conrad Burgh, the Treasurer-General of the United Provinces, to the Grand Pensionary's cousin, who had lately been sent to Poland as minister plenipotentiary, and to the son of the late ambassador Boreel, the States of Holland, to whom belonged the right of nomination, on the advice of John

de Witt, proposed to the States-General Peter de Groot, ambassador of the United Provinces in Sweden. They thus selected from their diplomatists the one who was most likely to be well received at the court of France.

De Groot belonged to an old family of Delft, which for five hundred years had filled the highest municipal functions. Hugo de Groot, his father—better known as Grotius—one of the most remarkable men of his time, had been a victim of the civil disorder which had cost the life of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, Olden Barneveldt. Freed from captivity by the devotion of his wife, who effected his escape from his prison at Loevestein in a chest of books, he had been obliged to leave his country, and had withdrawn to Sweden, where his services were eagerly solicited by Queen Christina. Sent as ambassador to Paris, he readily won the good graces of Louis XIV., and was received with open arms by all learned France.

His son, over whose education he had watched notwithstanding his exile, justified the father's hopes. In appearance he was weakly and insignificant, and was slightly lame from the results of a fall; but, writes a contemporary, 'Nature, who had been but a stepmother to his body, had been a true mother to his mind.' Educated at the university of Leyden, he repaired to France to complete his studies near his father, and took his degree of Doctor of Law at Orleans. He did not marry until 1652, when he was thirty-seven years old, and then took to wife Agatha van Rhijn, who brought him besides fortune every gift that could make life happy. 'I loved her above all things,' he wrote twenty years later in exile and after her death; 'she was indefatigable in her care of me, lavishing upon me her kindness and affection. Until her illness, which was the beginning of my sorrows, I may say that I knew only superficially all the ills of life.'

After being for some years councillor to the Elector Palatine, De Groot entered the service of his own country, by his appointment to the important office of Pensionary of Amsterdam, which gave him a seat in the Assembly of the States of Holland. He quitted it only to be sent as ambassador to Sweden, and while in Stockholm secured the defini-

tive conclusion of the Triple Alliance. In the following year he heard almost at the same time that he had been proposed by the deputies of Holland for the French embassy, and that he had been elected by the burgomasters and councillors of Rotterdam as pensionary of that town. He hesitated as to the choice he should make: his appointment to the office of pensionary of his native town of Rotterdam would restore to him the fortune of his ancestors, of which his father had been deprived by Maurice of Orange. On the other hand, his selection for the French embassy—flattering as it might be to his ambition—had already brought him some annoyance. It had been opposed by several provinces, and when an agreement in his favour was at length arrived at in the Assembly of the States-General, the deputies of Amsterdam, led by his personal enemy Valkenier, had refused to guarantee to him on his return from France the next vacancy in the court of justice, which he would have desired to secure for himself. He was, however, too indifferent to his personal interests to allow them to weigh against those of the public.

He yielded accordingly to the advice of the Grand Pensionary, who, notwithstanding the advantages of his presence in the Assembly of the States of the province, where he would have been a most useful ally of the republican party, made all such considerations secondary to the necessity for his prompt departure. In accepting the embassy twelve months after it had been first offered to him, he stipulated for no conditions, he did not even demand any additional salary on account of the heavy expenses of a residence at the court of France, where 'I spend a third more than is allowed me,' he writes eighteen months later, on the eve of his return to the Hague. He had no thought but that of fulfilling an imperative duty, no wish but that of rendering a great service to his country.

He might have been excused in refusing, by intelligence which gave him warning of the difficulties in the way of the success of his mission. The communications from Count d'Estrades which De Groot had received during a recent visit of the former to the Hague, and the still less reassuring declara-

tions of the Marquis de Pomponne, left him few illusions as to the disposition of Louis XIV. towards the United Provinces. The States-General, indeed, were so alarmed, that the most trivial events or the most improbable news were enough to make them fear a breach. They had already taken umbrage at the proposal made in the preceding year by Count d'Estrades, who had asked their leave to resign the command of the company that he held, but had not fulfilled his intentions. Their fears were renewed when the Prince of Tarentum, having abjured the reformed faith, resigned all the offices that he held—such as those of lieutenant-general of cavalry, and governor of Bois-le-Duc—notwithstanding the pressure put upon him to retain them. Incredulous of the motives he alleged for his conduct, they persuaded themselves that he chose not to remain in their service, in obedience to the secret instructions, or at least the wishes, of the King of France.

The States were also alarmed at the number of troops which Louis had collected and were now being trained at the camp of St. Germain. Their uneasiness appeared suddenly justified by the alarm given to De Groot on his journey across France. 'The ambassador of the United Provinces having started on his journey,' writes Pomponne in his memoirs, 'met some regiments on the march in the forest of Senlis. They were troops who had quitted the camp. Surprised and disturbed by the movement of the division, he asked its destination. Some officers, who had found out that he was the envoy of the States-General, amused themselves by replying that it was the royal army on its way to Maestricht. He took the matter more seriously than was meant, and the very same day imparted his fears to his employers.' Although still at absolute peace with France, there was little doubt felt at the Hague that Louis XIV. was about to recommence war, and to resume against the United Provinces that sudden invasion of the Spanish Netherlands which he had embarked upon three years previously. On receiving the communication sent to him by De Groot, De Witt hastened to call upon the French ambassador. 'It was

the first and only time,' observes Pomponne, 'that I noticed any confusion in the mind or countenance of that minister who was always master of himself and always equal in the greatest and most difficult matters.' Pomponne hastened to reassure him by a positive assertion 'that if the Dutch ambassador had encountered any division of the army, it was only because the troops were returning to their garrisons after the camp had broken up.'

It is hard to believe that Pomponne invented an imaginary story, although De Groot persisted in denying that he had been the dupe of a mystification. 'I was not at all alarmed at the disquieting information that I received upon the road,' he writes to Wicquefort after his arrival in Paris, 'as I had too much confidence in the King's sense of justice, and in the advanced season of the year, which would not allow of the commencement of such a rupture. It was reported, however, at court that I had taken such alarm that I had despatched a special messenger to give warning to my masters. But I replied to those who told me of this, that they must have a very bad opinion of me to think that I could have so bad a one of the King.' At any rate, whatever had been the first news sent to De Witt, that which followed could not fail to justify the anxiety of the Grand Pensionary. If the troops met by De Groot were not intended as a menace against Maestricht they were at least directed against Lorraine—a sudden invasion of which would leave the United Provinces at the mercy of Louis XIV., and threaten them with an aggression against which their ambassador vainly attempted to guard them.

De Groot reached Paris at the end of August 1670, after a journey the fatigues of which were increased by his sufferings from gout, but found Louis absent on a visit to Chambord. He put himself in communication with the Secretary of State, Lionne, to request his good graces for the conciliatory mission he came to fulfil. Lionne, with no wish, however, to dishearten him, did not conceal from him how difficult his task would be. His illness having delayed the audience which he had hitherto failed to obtain, the deputies

of Amsterdam, persisting in their hostility towards him, showed some disposition to demand his recall at once. But at last, after three months' residence, he was enabled to make his state entry into the capital with a suite of twenty-five coaches with six horses each. The next day he repaired in great state to Saint Germain, where he was received in turns by the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin. The first difficulties which he had to settle were questions of commerce. The duties imposed by Colbert upon Dutch manufactures closed the French markets to them. To reopen them the United Provinces had the choice of two courses, conciliation or reprisal. In the hope of obtaining a hearing for his complaints, De Groot abstained from even the appearance of menace. Faithful to the instructions of the Grand Pensionary, he represented to Lionne that he was charged to implore Louis XIV. to put an end to his severities towards the trade of the United Provinces. Lionne inquired at once if he were asking for a right or a favour, adding that the States-General had done nothing to incline the King of France to grant them any favours. De Groot did not allow himself to be put out of countenance. The French minister having declared that, if he wanted to get other measures adopted, he ought to begin by proving that France lost more than she gained by the taxes of which he complained, De Groot explained to Lionne that the system of duties established by Colbert would oblige other nations to reciprocate in a manner that would be fatal to French commerce. He owned that if the States-General had not yet resorted to such measures, it was from deference to the King, their ally; but he did not conceal from him that France would force them to adopt this course if she continued to forbid access to their merchandise. Finally he pointed out to him the loss she would suffer if she no longer found an outlet for her trade, while the United Provinces could dispense with French imports, since these consisted for the greater part of objects of luxury, besides wines and spirits.

Lionne avoided entering into an argument in which he felt that he might be worsted. He advised De Groot to call upon Colbert, who took care not to receive him. Still undis-

couraged, the ambassador of the republic endeavoured to enlighten Louis XIV. himself, and transmitted to him a memorandum in which he set forth, with great breadth of view and remarkable loftiness of tone, the considerations which he had placed before Lionne. In it he upheld the cause of free trade as benefiting the happiness of nations, by opening new springs for the labour and skill of men, and securing to them, whether by facilities of exchange only or by the cheapness arising from competition, all the comforts of life at a small cost. In the most exalted strain of thought he referred it to the will of God, 'Who, in His Divine Providence,' he writes, 'desired not only to give to His creatures all that would be of service to them, but also to give it to them by means fitted to establish general friendship and intercourse between all parts of the world, and so varied the nature of soils and climates.' 'It would be,' he added, 'a disturbance of this order, if the subjects of one kingdom were to be prevented from enjoying the fruits of another country, and from disposing in exchange of the produce of their own soil or their own labour.'

Louis XIV. was too impatient to gratify his resentment, and Colbert too obstinately determined to put in practice his system of protection of trade, to take any heed of the considerations of philosophy or the reasonings of political economy. On receipt of the ambassador's memoir, the King sent him word that he would reply to it as soon as he had looked into it. The reply sent by Lionne was summed up in these words: 'That his Majesty was acting within the terms of the treaty, and would alter nothing in the measures that he had taken concerning trade.' There remained nothing for the United Provinces but to obtain redress for themselves. Convinced by the first despatches addressed by De Groot to De Witt that it was useless to attempt to obtain any satisfaction from the King of France, the States of Holland, taking the initiative, had already urged the States-General to interdict French commerce so long as the French markets were closed to the trade of the United Provinces.

By the influence of the Grand Pensionary, whose eyes were now opened as to the policy of conciliation he had so

long recommended, the difficulties suggested by some of the provinces, who still hesitated about taking decided measures, were at length set aside. In the beginning of the year 1671 the States-General published a proclamation prohibiting French brandies, imposing a duty of twenty-five per cent. upon salt, taxing foreign syrup at a halfpenny per pound so as to strike at the French sugar refineries, and laying a duty of fifty per cent. upon French goods of the nature of articles of luxury, dress, or furniture. Desiring to give to these measures, which they felt themselves obliged to take, merely the character of reprisals, the States engaged not to enforce them if the King of France would renounce the new tariffs which were ruining the commerce of the republic.

Louis XIV., however, pretended to consider himself aggrieved by the resolution they had taken, and immediately issued an Order of Council laying fresh and crushing duties upon herrings and spices entering France. In addition, as a blow to the carrying trade of the United Provinces, he forbade the export in their ships of any cargoes of wine or brandy from the kingdom, alleging the refusal of the States-General to allow these products to enter their territories. This was a direct breach of the treaty of alliance and commerce concluded between the two countries in 1662, which stipulated reciprocal freedom of traffic for all goods and merchandise the transport of which was not forbidden to the subjects of the King of France. 'The honour of so great a monarch,' writes De Witt to De Groot, 'seems interested in this business, that he may not be stained with the accusation of a breach of his word as confirmed by his own hand and deed.' But remonstrances and offers of concession alike failed to move Louis. He seemed even to take pleasure in threatening the States with the most violent measures. The warning given to the principal traders in Paris and in the sea-board towns to recall French goods shipped in Dutch vessels, made De Groot fear that the seizure of all merchant ships carrying the flags of the United Provinces might be imminent. The States-General, according to the despatches of their ambassador, might prepare for the worst extremities.

Fresh fears were raised when the King of France announced to them his intention of visiting his Flemish frontiers in the spring of the year 1671, with an army of 30,000 men, which was to be encamped at Ath and at Dunkirk. At the same time Louis informed the King of England and the Emperor of Germany that Spain had nothing to fear for the Netherlands. The States-General, indirectly informed of these assurances, which seemed to them to forebode danger to themselves, vainly endeavoured to obtain some reassuring promises, which the King of France was careful to evade. The communications which they received from Madrid and Brussels increased their uneasiness and made them fear a declaration of war.

The Grand Pensionary, foreseeing that a rupture was inevitable, would not leave the United Provinces exposed without defence to the dangers of a surprise. In the previous year he had pointed out the necessity of fresh levies, and declared that the States ought to redouble their precautionary measures. As the danger drew nearer he began to advise boldness instead of prudence. After consultation with the Spanish ambassador and the Emperor's minister he recommended the States to assume the offensive, thinking it better to affront the perils of war rather than to wait for certain destruction. 'This advice might have been the best,' wrote Pomponne in after days; 'the French fortified towns lay open, the King's forces had not yet been swelled by the troops he afterwards raised in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and his own dominions; he had no navy afloat, and the harbours of France were disarmed.' Admiral Ruyter, summoned from Amsterdam and secretly consulted, answered for the success of a descent upon the coast of France and the occupation of the Isle of Oleron, which would close to French vessels the rivers of the Loire, the Garonne, and the Charente.

But the schemes of the Grand Pensionary were too bold not to encounter insuperable objections, and the temporising counsels opposed to them more easily obtained a hearing. Accordingly Pomponne hastened to reassure the court of France, and Lionne having alluded in one of his letters

to that fable of La Fontaine in which the rats consulted together as to who should bell the cat, he replied that 'this comparison would soon be seen to be well-founded, so quickly would the resolution of all their advisers vanish as soon as the question arose of who should tie the bell.' The King of France too, desirous to gain time, took pains to deceive De Groot by tardy assurances of a pacific policy, by which the Dutch ambassador allowed himself to be deluded. Having obtained from Louis permission to accompany him to Dunkirk on his journey to Flanders, De Groot preceded him in order to present the report of his negotiations to the States. He inspired them with fresh confidence by giving them hopes that the King of France would not prove inexorable, and that he would in all probability be obliged to pay some heed to the sufferings of his subjects, who were incurring losses to the amount of 35,000,000 francs yearly by duties imposed in France upon foreign products, and in the United Provinces upon French goods. De Groot further pointed out 'the penury of the treasury and the insufficiency of the naval armaments' as so many obstacles which must prevent any war being undertaken, at least at present.

His predictions appeared to be verified by the inoffensive operations of the French troops collected in Flanders. Louis employed them, under the direction of Vauban, in works of fortification which gave the name of the 'wheelbarrow campaign' to these military operations. Encouraged by this apparent security, the States-General instructed De Groot to carry back to the King of France the most conciliatory proposals and to offer excuses to him for the course they had followed. Meanwhile the Grand Pensionary was attempting to renew with Pomponne the negotiations concerning the Spanish succession. He represented to him that the Triple Alliance, to which the United Provinces would always remain faithful, did not prevent them from coming to an understanding with France for settling the future fate of the Netherlands conditionally on the death of the King of Spain. To gain a favourable reception for these proposals, De Witt urged the

former French ambassador, Count d'Estrades, with whom he had always maintained the most friendly relations, to take advantage of his visit to Dunkirk to come to the Hague for a week. 'In Monsieur de Witt's anxiety to speak to me,' writes D'Estrades, 'he will tell me things which I feel certain he would not say to anyone else.'

The illusion was soon dispelled. Determined to reject all advances, Louis desired his ambassador to 'listen to no discourse which might even be to his advantage.' Not only did he refuse permission to D'Estrades to visit the Hague, but he even put an end to Pomponne's embassy by sending him to Stockholm to detach Sweden from the Dutch alliance. 'The King, who had summoned me to Dunkirk,' writes Pomponne, 'welcomed me with that gracious reception that he accords generally to those with whom he is satisfied, and from whom he expects some service. He made me give him an account of the situation of the republic, of its embarrassments, of the advances that had been made towards a reconciliation, and of the replies given to evade it.' To delay, however, the rupture of diplomatic relations, the King desired him simultaneously with his recall to announce the appointment of Courtin as his successor. He desired him to assure the States-General 'that, in making choice of the minister who had already represented him at the Hague, he continued to testify his good-will towards them.' 'He thought,' writes Lionne, 'that such assurances might lull these beggars to sleep,' and the French ambassador was careful to renew these protestations of good-will in the solemn farewell audience given him by the States-General.

They could not, however, deceive De Witt. As soon as he heard of the recall of the Marquis de Pomponne, he went to see him that he might not appear to despair yet of the reconciliation Courtin might effect, though he plainly expressed his uneasiness on the subject. Pomponne having attempted to soothe his anxiety by reassuring him as to the short visit that he was about to make to Sweden, De Witt did not conceal that he considered himself justified in disbelieving him. The absence of Courtin, who, notwithstanding his appointment, never entered upon his residence, dispelled the illusions of

the most confiding. The King of France was no longer represented at the Hague. He contented himself with retaining as agent a subject of the republic, Bernarts or Bernard, who continued his correspondence until the declaration of war, and even after the rupture, but was never invested with any diplomatic authority.

The intelligence transmitted by the ambassador of the States-General on his return to Paris belied the last hopes of peace which he had rashly encouraged. De Groot was not long in discovering the treachery or credulity of those who had persuaded him that France was not in a position to undertake a new war. His despatches constantly gave notice of French armaments and negotiations, and left no further doubt as to the agreement between Louis and Charles II., while they announced that the United Provinces would be attacked by France in the following spring. Believing that he could not turn aside the course of events, over which diplomacy seemed to him now to have no hold, suffering besides from attacks of illness which left him sometimes 'no power to read, write, or even speak,' De Groot urgently demanded his recall. The States requested him to remain at his post as long as he could fulfil its functions. He complied with their request, but wrote at the same time to them that neither his presence nor absence could be of any further advantage or prejudice to the republic.

The Grand Pensionary could not, however, make up his mind to believe that all negotiation was useless, and endeavoured to persuade De Groot that there was still a last chance of the preservation of peace. 'The only thing,' he writes to his brother-in-law, Deutz, 'which might suggest a contrary opinion to the expectation of a rupture is that both at the court of France and among the French ministers residing at the other European courts, the intention is too openly proclaimed, and it is allowed that nothing can be more opposed to the political principles and practice of France than to give notice of the blow so long beforehand to those on whom it is intended to fall.' If he really cherished this illusion it was of short duration.

In vain did the States-General make a final attempt to

intimidate or to mollify the King of France. Their alterations of reprisals and remonstrances were but idle expedients, and could only serve to prove their weakness, while exposing them to fresh humiliations. After vainly renewing their remonstrances against the duties levied by Louis, which were so much to their injury, they attempted to carry out to the last extremity a war of tariffs against French commerce which should compel Louis to show himself more compliant. They hoped thus to strike at the very foundations of the wealth of France, by making her lose the great profits of her exports to the United Provinces. They especially persuaded themselves that the interdiction of French wine would inflict irreparable injury on the wine-growers, and would spread discontent among many of the provinces of France that must in the end get the better of Colbert's determination. But they were not long in perceiving that they could not count upon the murmurs of the subjects of the King of France to dissuade him from the severities systematically practised towards them. If they had flattered themselves that they could force a change of policy upon him, they could no longer conceal from themselves the vanity of their hopes.

Negotiations could not help them any more than retaliation. They endeavoured, however, to resume them by taking advantage of the appointment of Pomponne as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The great minister, Hugues de Lionne, who had so skilfully conducted the foreign policy of Louis XIV., worn out by work and over-indulgence in pleasure, had recently died suddenly, before receiving the recompense of his last diplomatic successes. It was for Pomponne that the King of France reserved his inheritance. Louis despatched a gentleman of his household to Stockholm to deliver to him a letter announcing his appointment. He received the news, as he tells us in his memoirs, with a calmness that does honour to his Christian principles, 'not allowing himself to be dazzled by the favours of Fortune, and rather preparing to support her ill-will.' De Witt hastened to write to him to congratulate him in the warmest terms, and to beg him to assist in restoring that friendship which both countries

had formerly thought so necessary, assuring him that the States for their part had no other wish than to respond. 'It would be,' he said, 'a task worthy of the hand of a minister belonging by birth to a family which has produced so many great men, and in which I have always observed such pacific inclinations that there is nothing I do not venture to promise myself.' In the hope that on his way from Sweden to France, Pomponne might pass through the Hague, the States directed the Grand Pensionary to request a conference with him; but they learnt to their regret that he would return to France through Münster and Cologne, by the King's orders, and would thus avoid any meeting.

They had no resource left but a direct appeal to Louis XIV., either to be taken again into favour, or to know with certainty that he was determined to attack them, in order to claim the assistance of their allies. They solemnly addressed to him, accordingly, a letter in which they expressed their fears, and declared that they could not believe in the aggression with which they were threatened, so long as they had received no preliminary notice of the offences imputed to them. After defending themselves from the accusations of having failed in the observance of their treaty of alliance with France, they expressed once more their desire to put an end to the mutual vexations from which the trade of both countries was suffering. They justified their armaments by an appeal to the necessity of defence, and offered to disarm if the King of France would assure them they had no attack from him to apprehend. They finally protested their eagerness to give him the most complete satisfaction, although they could not give up the engagements which they had entered into with other allies.

Objections were raised to the despatch of this letter, which seemed to amount to an apology from the States, and some members of the Assembly asked that it should be sent to De Groot in the form of instructions to which their ambassador should conform himself at his next interview with Louis XIV. Others represented that it was of importance to make a public communication to the King of France, in order to baffle the intrigues to which he resorted to persuade the other powers

that the United Provinces were disposed to give up the Netherlands to him, and so to betray the Triple Alliance. Not choosing to give any grounds for the rumour of secret negotiations entered into by the Grand Pensionary, the States-General decided that De Groot should be instructed to demand an audience of the King, in order to deliver to Louis the letter addressed to him by them. The King of France was in no haste to receive him, but allowed his reply to be easily foreseen. He began by notifying to the States his decision on their dispute with Denmark, which had been submitted to his arbitration, and seemed to take pains to give judgment against them on all points; and notwithstanding the urgent entreaties of the Dutch ambassador, he kept him waiting for his audience until the beginning of the following year.

De Groot left Paris in his state coach at six o'clock in the morning of January 4, 1672, arriving at St. Germain at nine. He first laid his case before Letellier, representing to him the misfortunes that a rupture would cause even to France, and the engagements which the United Provinces would be forced to enter into with the enemies of the kingdom. Letellier, who had no fears on that score, being aware of the alliances which Louis had secured, evaded all reply, asserting that the King had not yet announced any intention of declaring war against the States. Half an hour after this first interview, De Groot was admitted to Louis XIV., being obliged on account of his infirmities to be carried in a chair as far as the guard-room. 'I told the King,' he writes, 'that my masters asked not to be worse treated than common criminals, who, at least, know what crimes are imputed to them. Their conscience, I added, is so much at ease that they do not doubt that they can clear themselves, and any involuntary offence they are ready to make good. The King can obtain every reasonable satisfaction which he is about to seek in the chances of war instead of having them accorded to the mere power of his name. Having thus begun the interview, I present the letter from the States; the King opens it and says angrily that it is very unnecessary, since it has been already communicated to the courts of Europe, and he himself

has a copy. I reply that the debates in the Assembly of the States are public, and that he would have had the first information if he had granted me an audience sooner. The King expresses surprise that the States should call him to account for his armaments, theirs having been the cause of his. I assure him that the States desire nothing more than disarmament, and to be foremost in satisfying him. The King, to close the interview, replies that having begun his armaments he shall now conclude them, and will afterwards come to a determination in accordance with the dictates of his glory and his interests.'

The despatch sent by Louis to the States two days after his reply to De Groot, was still more haughty and menacing. He added sarcasm to arrogance. 'If it is true, as you acknowledge,' he writes, 'that justice is the rule of our actions, and that you are satisfied with the examination that you have made of your own, you ought not to be in any anxiety.' He concluded by boasting of his alliances, and launching the following haughty challenge from the stronger to the weaker: 'We must tell you that we shall increase our armaments on land and at sea, and that when they are in that condition in which we propose to place them, we shall make such use of them as we consider suitable to our dignity, holding ourselves accountable to no man.'

This reply sufficiently proved that Louis was resolved to dispense with all pretext for a declaration of war. The States-General might at least take advantage of it to arouse the fears of the European courts concerning the King of France's schemes of conquest, and they hastened to send it to their ambassadors in England, Sweden, and Spain, with directions to make it public. There was no need of any further useless precautions, De Groot having sent them word that nothing was to be hoped in future from any negotiations, and there was nothing left for them but to await a rupture that could now be neither averted nor retarded.

Louis XIV. had in fact resolved to destroy the republic which his ancestor Henry IV. had so powerfully assisted to establish. Hitherto she had flourished under the patronage

of France, and had seemed almost a colony of hers. Commercial relations between the two nations had rapidly increased, so that many Dutch travellers were to be found even in the south of France. France, on the other hand, was in some sort represented in Holland by a tribe of French emigrants of every rank and every condition. Some came to enrich themselves by the gains of trade, which promised them a rapid fortune, or else like Descartes they found here a security favourable to study. Others, such as Cardinal de Retz, Saint Evremond, and the Prince of Tarentum, had taken refuge here after the troubles of the Fronde, in which they had been implicated. The town of Amsterdam alone contained more than 2,000 Frenchmen who had married and settled there. French actors gave performances at the Hague. This population of new-comers had familiarised the Dutch with the language, the customs, and tastes of their mother-country. To treat the republic of the United Provinces as an enemy to be defeated and destroyed was accordingly to mistake and endanger the interests of France. Louis XIV. was not to sacrifice them with impunity to his impatience for revenge. The Dutch war, by preparing the way for the elevation of the Prince who was to become his most formidable enemy, was destined to justify the predictions of the Grand Pensionary. De Witt had not been wrong when he pointed out to De Groot 'the dangerous effects which the approaching rupture with the King of France have already produced, and the injurious results which would ensue to his interests, the smouldering fire of the Prince of Orange's party having been re-kindled, and it not appearing possible again to extinguish it.' Despising the counsels of political prudence, Louis XIV. was about to strike a blow at the United Provinces which was fated to recoil upon himself, but he was too bent upon avenging on them the Triple Alliance, to give any check to the free course of his resentment, not foreseeing how he would one day come to repent it.

The relations of the United Provinces with England were preparing for them a grievous disappointment which was destined to be no less fatal. Charles II., whose hostility was all

the more dangerous that it was well concealed, had hitherto maintained the appearances of friendly feeling in his communications with John Boreel, the Dutch ambassador, and had shown himself no less kindly disposed towards Van Beuningen, who had been charged with a special mission to the court of London. Fearing lest the information they might give to their employers should be made use of to encourage internal dissensions in his kingdom, he had taken care to keep on good terms with them, for which he made excuses to Louis. Boreel and Van Beuningen had both allowed themselves to be deceived by this treacherous courtesy. Until the very eve of the declaration of war, Boreel continued to delude the States with assurances of peace. Van Beuningen was equally blind. On his return to the Hague in December 1670, he informed the States-General 'that on his arrival in London he had not found the court very well disposed, but that the journey of the Prince of Orange to England had been most favourable to the interests of the republic.' The hostility of the English people towards France seemed to him besides a sufficient guarantee against idle fears. He exhibited this confidence at the very moment when the King of England, satisfied that he had secured the integrity of the Netherlands, had come to an understanding with Louis XIV. for the dismemberment of the United Provinces.

The King of France was delighted with this blindness, which was notified to him by his ambassador at the Hague with eager satisfaction. 'Van Beuningen,' writes Pomponne, 'is quite full of the phantom belief that he rules the court of London. Only a few days since, I was so good as to accept some very ironical compliments that he made me in the manner in which England has turned round in our favour.' Lionne envied Pomponne the malicious pleasure which the latter could thus enjoy. 'I should greatly like to spend a quarter of an hour at the Hague,' he writes to him, 'that I might have a good laugh with you over all the wonders that such a clever man thinks he has accomplished in England for the service of his masters.' 'But,' he adds, 'the poor dupe will be furious when he sees the last scene of the comedy in

which he has so long played so pitiful a part.' In order to obtain clearer information, the Grand Pensionary had since Van Beuningen's return vainly urged upon Boreel to take measures to 'find out what engagements Charles had entered into with Louis in order to leave the King of France free to act as he pleased.' The letters he received from the Dutch ambassador in Paris completed his deception. Although De Groot, who could not be suspected of partiality for Charles II., did not conceal from him that he had little to expect from such an ally, he could not believe that the States had any aggression on his part to fear. 'If the King of England does us no good,' he writes, 'at least he will not do us much harm, being too fond of *louis d'or* to do the former, and too much in awe of his people to venture upon the latter.' The certainty expressed by a diplomatist so highly considered, soothed the alarms of the Grand Pensionary. Having concluded the Triple Alliance only three years before, De Witt could not persuade himself that his great diplomatic work was fated to be of such ephemeral duration. Trusting to the assurances given him by De Groot, he depended upon the nation and the Parliament to prevent Charles from sacrificing the interests of his kingdom to the French alliance.

The expressions of public opinion and the votes of Parliament seemed to give grounds for his opinion. The English people rejected with alarm and indignation the idea of a fresh war with the United Provinces. Not only did they fear the cost, and also consider it fatal to their commerce, but they thought the independence of England endangered by union with France, which would make Louis XIV. the master of Europe. They were alarmed besides by an alliance which must inevitably encourage Charles in undertakings that were menacing to the Protestant faith and the public freedom.

Parliament exhibited the same suspicions and the same fears, and the Government found itself obliged to pay some heed to them. At the opening of the session the Lord Keeper Bridgeman asked for the funds necessary for the armaments which were to be opposed to those of France. Uneasy at the journey of Louis into Flanders, Parliament hastened to vote

credits amounting to 800,000*l.* for the equipment of a fleet of fifty ships. The States-General were convinced that Parliament would not allow this money to be turned to any other purpose, and had no suspicion that the liberality of Louis had already placed other funds at the disposal of Charles. The Triple Alliance seemed to them accordingly to be safe from attack, in spite of any wish of Charles to break it, so long as Parliament remained its guardian, and by its power of voting the taxes kept the English Government dependent upon it.

The policy imposed upon them henceforth was necessarily therefore one of conciliation, which must be maintained to prevent the King of England from infecting the nation with his own hostile feelings towards the republic. British pride had of necessity been offended by the outburst of popular joy and patriotic pride which the Chatham expedition had provoked in the United Provinces. Books, lampoons, pictures, medals, all had been employed to perpetuate the memory of a victory which had brought to a glorious end the war with England. The book called '*Belgium gloriosum*,' published in Latin and Dutch by the pastor Jacques Leydius, had made a great sensation. A picture—at the foot of which a haughty inscription was prominently placed, and which represented Cornelius de Witt, the States Commissioner with the fleet, crowned by Victory before the English ships burnt at Chatham—adorned the town hall at Dordrecht. The '*Royal Charles*,' which had been captured, was anchored in the roadstead off Helvoetsluys, near the mouth of the Meuse, as if for the purpose of public exhibition. The States-General had hitherto been content with preventing the insolent boldness of Captain van Brakel from giving ground for complaint to the English Government. The English ambassador having complained of his conduct in hoisting with the flag of the republic the pennants and standards which he had seized at Chatham, the States-General had lost no time in sending him orders to give up these trophies, and had returned them to London.

Charles II., who only sought for occasions of conflict with the States-General, accused them of continuing their provocations. In a letter written to Temple after the return of the

English ambassador to London, the Grand Pensionary vainly endeavours to limit the scope of the King of England's complaints. 'I could wish,' he writes, 'that on neither side had there appeared lampoons, verses, or medals which could give offence, and that no more thought might be bestowed upon the accidents of a war the remembrance of which should be banished for ever. I freely confess that in this country too much licence is taken in some things, although, after very close inquiry, it has not been found that the libels most complained of were printed in this province. You, sir, and all those like you, are above what you rightly call trifles, and you will take notice only of the real intentions of the State, in which the King will always find all the respect that he can desire.'

The King of England paid no attention to these explanations, and with still greater haughtiness demanded prompt satisfaction for his complaints. De Witt in return expressed both surprise and displeasure; he recalled the fact that all states, whether monarchies or republics, had always celebrated their victories by pictures and medals. 'It seems,' he writes to Van Beuningen, 'as if the English Government must be determined upon hostility towards us to resort to such complaints. We cannot understand how a foreign monarch can pretend to lay down the law to a free republic. Moreover, the medals have not the offensive character attributed to them, and the figures represented upon them have no pretension to a likeness which could convert them into an effigy of the King of England. Neither is it true that the "*Royal Charles*" is shown for money, or that it has been made into an alehouse where success is drunk to the future war, a subject in which we should have no reason to congratulate ourselves.'

A debate with closed doors was held in the States of Holland upon the concessions which might be made. Notwithstanding the opposition of the nobles and of several towns, who, according to Pomponne, did not choose to despoil themselves in time of peace of the tokens of glory won in the war, the States determined, but without debate and merely in the form of a discussion, 'that measures of temporisation must be used

towards England.' All copies of certain lampoons were seized, the dies of several medals were broken, and the States had the arms withdrawn from the 'Royal Charles' and the name changed. In his notification of these friendly proceedings to Boreel in London, the Grand Pensionary desired him to make the most of them as so many tokens of a conciliatory policy, although he feared that they would make England more exacting.

To prevent Parliament taking these advances into account, Charles endeavoured to fix on the States-General the accusation of secret proposals for coming to an understanding with France. The Grand Pensionary considered it the more incumbent upon him to answer such accusations that they were especially intended to apply to himself, he having, it was said, sent a confidential messenger to the court of France to induce him to take up arms against England. He wrote about this matter, a few months afterwards, to Boreel in the strongest terms and with unusual irritation: 'Having conjectured,' he writes, 'that the extravagant language said yonder to have been used by a minister might very possibly apply to me, I have since learnt, with some surprise, from your last missive, the effrontery displayed in this affair by the French news-writers, and the thoughtlessness with which this has been accepted. As to what I am said to have written directly or indirectly to Paris, and signed with a different name in two or more successive letters, to lay before the King of France some points which might serve as the basis for a closer treaty to the prejudice of England, I beg you to make known that no such letters can ever be produced, and so confound the inventors of such falsehoods by a direct denial. Although such untruths from their very nature can only be refuted by a formal contradiction (for it is impossible to prove a negative), I can, however, oppose to them a despatch written by me on the subject of the appointment of Monsieur de Pomponne as Minister of State. As you will observe, I appended to my congratulations an expression of my great hope that Monsieur de Pomponne, before his departure from Sweden, might find means to pave the way for a general alliance between

France on the one hand, and England, Sweden, and this State closely bound together on the other, which to my mind abundantly proves that I have had no thought of renewing our friendship with France to the prejudice of England.' The Grand Pensionary adds with well-merited sarcasm: 'It were to be wished that, on the part of England, as little negotiation were being carried on with France to the prejudice of this State as is the case with their High Mightinesses, for it is common to impute to others the faults we commit ourselves.'

The States-General could not better prove their sincerity to Charles than by sending him fresh proposals for an alliance especially intended to reassure Parliament. Not allowing themselves to be repelled by his unfriendliness, they represented to him 'that, unless he wished to reduce them to dependence upon the King of France, the King of England should concert with them measures of defence for both nations, and assent to a mutual pledge to break with the enemy who should attack one or other of the allies.' Instead of receiving these advances favourably, Charles declared that the States-General ought in the first place to offer him subsidies. De Witt was not disposed to grant them. 'The best thing for us to do,' he writes to the ambassador Boreel, 'is to employ our money in ships and soldiers for our defence.' The States-General refused to yield to these demands. They were informed, moreover, that Charles would not content himself with them, and that, unless they made over to him the towns of Brill and Flushing, which would open to him by sea the entrance into the United Provinces, they had nothing to expect from England.

All hope of retaining the English alliance was ended by the final recall of Sir William Temple. On his departure from the Hague, after the invasion of Lorraine by Louis XIV., Temple had received instructions to leave his wife and his establishment behind him, in order thus to confirm the assurance of his return, which was constantly demanded by the Grand Pensionary. His urgency becoming importunate to Charles, the King informed the States-General that Temple would not be sent back to the Hague, and that he proposed shortly to

send over a successor to him. 'His Majesty,' writes Arlington to the English ambassador in Spain, 'wishes for some one who will show more firmness than he has done in forcing the Dutch to give him satisfaction on several points relating to trade, instead of taking pains to invent new methods of embarrassing him in his political engagements to his prejudice.' The Grand Pensionary, in his discouragement, wrote to Temple to impart to him his melancholy thoughts. In the letter which he addressed to him he expresses his acknowledgments for the pleasant terms on which they had been during his stay at the Hague, and for the visits paid to him by Lady Temple since her husband's departure, and gives free vent to his regrets for being no longer able to enjoy the honour of his conversation or the charm of his correspondence. 'Believe me,' he concludes, 'that one of the things that I most ardently desire is to see you again.'

By recalling Temple, Charles II. proposed not merely to signify to the United Provinces that they must no longer count upon the Triple Alliance, but in particular he was seeking cause for a rupture. He had despatched the 'Merlin,' a yacht belonging to the English navy, to bring back the ambassador's wife, who had not hitherto received permission to rejoin her husband. Captain Caron, who was charged with this mission, received orders to sail through the Dutch fleet that was then cruising in the Channel, and to fire at the ships nearest to him until he made them haul down their flag or until they fired at him again. These instructions were communicated to the French ambassador, who writes to Louis XIV. : 'The captain is to use all his powder so as to give good cause for a quarrel.'

A conflict was inevitable, as no justification could be offered for the pretension to make a whole fleet dip their ensigns to a yacht, nor any ground for it be found in existing treaties. On her way to Holland the yacht passed the Dutch fleet, but was unable to execute the orders that had been given on account of the violence of the wind, which obliged her to keep at a distance. But it was not so on the return passage. On August 24, 1671, the yacht, with the royal standard flying

from her mainmast, came upon the Dutch fleet at anchor, six leagues from the coast of Zealand and sixteen from the English shore. Her captain fired from a distance several shots at their flagship, which not being able to reply at once, on account of the storm having laid her on her beam ends, Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent, believing that it was merely a question of a salute, took the place of Ruyter and returned it in the customary manner, but received in reply a discharge of cannon-balls. Surprised by such a proceeding, he sent an officer on board the yacht to ask for an explanation. The English captain informed him that he had fired because the Dutch flag had not been hauled down, and declared that he had orders to make the Dutch fleet dip ensigns wherever he met it. The officer who carried back this answer to Van Ghent told him that Lady Temple was on board the yacht. Van Ghent, who, at the Hague, had often visited the ambassador's wife, took the opportunity of paying his compliments to her in order to have a personal interview with the captain. Having come on board he represented to Captain Caron that he could not concede his claim without an express order from the States, and tried also to persuade him how unjustifiable it was, and that it ought at any rate to be submitted to the inquiry of the two governments. Fearing, perhaps, to have exceeded his orders, and not caring to get himself into trouble, the captain thought it best to consult with Lady Temple in the hope that she would dissuade him from proceeding further. 'He came to my wife,' writes Temple to his father in relating this adventure to him, 'and desired to know what she pleased he should do in the case; which she saw he did not like very well, and would be glad to get out of by her help. She told him he knew his orders best, and what he was to do upon them; which she left to him to follow as he thought fit, without any regard to her or her children.' However, after firing one more shot at one of the smaller vessels in the squadron, the English captain thought it best to continue on his way peaceably, contenting himself with the demonstration he had made.

The English court, whose plan was already decided upon,

pretended indignation against Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent, but were secretly delighted at having raised up this dispute. While the Dutch ambassador, Boreel, timidly protested that it was only a misunderstanding which might be cleared up, Charles declared to him that he considered Van Ghent's conduct to have been premeditated. He thought thus to persuade the English that they had received an affront, and was in good hopes that by appealing to the national pride he might easily drag the country into a declaration of war. The captain of the yacht, far from being disavowed, was sent to the Tower for having consented to any discussion as to the salute of the flag, which he ought to have insisted upon at his risk and peril, and it was debated in the Privy Council whether a frigate should not be despatched to the Dutch fleet with orders to make every ship dip her ensign, and to fire upon them in case of refusal at the risk of being sunk. 'And thus,' writes Temple to his father, 'an adventure has ended in smoke which had for almost three years made much noise in the world, restored and preserved so long the general peace, and left his Majesty the arbitrage of all affairs among his neighbours. . . . The Dutch ministers at court, as ill noses as they have, began to smell the powder after the captain's shooting. . . .' The States-General, indignant at exactions which seemed to them both iniquitous and inadmissible, resolved to meet it by a manifesto which should do them justice. The members of the naval committee were instructed to consult for this purpose with the Commissioners of the Admiralties, and submit the proposal to them. In conformity with the conclusions arrived at in this document, the States declared that by the terms of the treaties appealed to by the English Government, 'the saluting of the flags should be regulated in future as it had been in the past,' and could not therefore be claimed except in British waters, where it was offered as a mark of courtesy, without any right being conceded to England to presume upon it as recognising her claims to the sovereignty of the seas. To avoid misunderstanding, Ruyter was instructed to draw up a set of rules prescribing the salutes to be given by the fleet in case of

meeting English or French vessels on the Dutch coast, which were to be confined to firing guns without the lowering of the flag.

Charles replied to this communication from the States-General by appointing Sir George Downing ambassador extraordinary to the Hague. He could not have made a choice more hostile to the republic. Not only had Downing the well-deserved reputation of being the most quarrelsome diplomatist of his day, but he had made himself notorious in the service, by turns, of Cromwell and of Charles II. for the enmity he had constantly displayed to the United Provinces. 'He seems to have no other mission,' writes De Groot to De Witt, 'than that of seeking a pretext for a rupture, instead of a means of settling the difficulty.' Negotiations carried on by him, therefore, could not be serious, and judging from the instructions given to him were meant to serve only as a preface to a declaration of war.

At the same time, Charles, whose armaments were not yet completed, skilfully turned to account the credulity of the Dutch ambassador, attempting in spite of appearances to lull the States again into security. Before leaving London, Downing charged Boreel to assure his masters that, if he had formerly had the misfortune to treat with the republic under painful circumstances, he would now make up for it in conformity with the new orders he had received, protesting that he was only going to the Hague in a pacific spirit, and with the design of strengthening the good understanding between the two nations. At the same time the King of England sent word to the States-General that, being informed of the aggression with which they were threatened by France, he was sending Downing to the Hague to offer his mediation to the republic, that he was making a similar proposal to Louis XIV., and that if he did not succeed in obtaining its acceptance he should none the less fulfil all the stipulations of the Triple Alliance. 'The States have received letters from their ambassador in England,' writes the French agent who had remained at the Hague, 'to the effect that he has made fresh appeals to the King of Great Britain to be informed of the real intentions of his Majesty;

upon which his Majesty had replied that if this State were attacked, to the prejudice of the last treaty of alliance, he would assist it, which has caused such rejoicing here as is not to be believed.'

The Grand Pensionary could no longer share this confidence. After long clinging to the hope of placing the English Parliament in opposition to the King, he heard that it had been set aside. Not choosing to ask for fresh subsidies, Charles, to avoid the resistance he foresaw, had prorogued Parliament and did not summon it again for eighteen months. He was thus left in some embarrassment for want of funds; but he was not long in finding means to procure them. The pecuniary advantages which he had always gained from the French alliance not appearing to him sufficient, he obtained permission from Louis to employ for the equipment of his fleet the sum which he had received for the levy of a body of 6,000 men, which he was dispensed from setting on foot. The subsidies which had been granted by Parliament in the preceding year not being sufficient to re-establish the equilibrium of his finances, he had recourse moreover to a species of bankruptcy to complete his warlike preparations.

A royal proclamation of January 2, 1672, announced the suspension of exchequer payments for a year, in consideration of a promise to the creditors of accounting for the interest due to them at six per cent. By this iniquitous proceeding a sum of about a million and a half was placed at the disposal of the Government. The failure of several banks and the ruin of many bondholders were the consequences of this faithlessness of the King to his financial engagements. Not only did he deal a dangerous blow to the commercial credit of England, but he compromised the royal prestige, and commenced opening that gulf between the court and the country which was destined to be hereafter enlarged.

As soon as he was sure of the necessary funds for the execution of his plans, Charles thought himself no longer obliged to conceal them. Having demanded a solemn audience of the States-General, Downing repaired to their assembly with a train of more than one hundred persons. He began by com-

plaining of the insults offered to the King, his master, for which he demanded prompt and full reparation, thereby causing great surprise. Van Ghent, the deputy of Guelders, who was president of the sitting, replied that the friendship of England had been always greatly valued by the United Provinces, and that they were determined to observe the treaties concluded between the two nations. He added that if Charles II. professed to be offended, the States would endeavour to give him all reasonable satisfaction, as soon as they knew the particulars of the affronts mentioned. Downing was not satisfied with this reply, and demanded a second audience. The States-General sent him word that they would appoint commissioners to treat with him. Instead of contenting himself with this mark of good-will, Downing presented to the States a haughty note in which he put forth fresh demands. Not only did he claim the prompt and effectual punishment of Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent for his conduct in refusing to lower the Dutch flag to an English yacht, but he also demanded an official recognition of the right of the King of England to the sovereignty of the seas in all waters, thus requiring that the States-General should in future hold themselves bound to dip their ensigns, even of the whole fleet, to the English men-of-war, whatever their number or rank. It was in fact asking them to acknowledge themselves subjects of Charles. The conferences which were at once begun between Downing and the deputies of the States could not bring about an agreement, notwithstanding the unanswerable arguments brought forward by the latter, which left no doubt as to the meaning of the treaties fallaciously invoked by the King of England.

Downing, seeing that the discussion could do him no good, intimated his refusal to allow any debate as to a right which he said he was instructed to insist upon, asserting that the King of England held to it no less than to his crown. Impatient to force matters to a conclusion, he suddenly announced while the conferences were still pending that he had just received instructions to demand his passports. In this extremity, the States-General sought to save

the republic by a final sacrifice, hard as it was to them. Their ambassador Boreel, whose blindness was incurable, never ceased to represent to them that by yielding as to the flag, they would indispose the English nation for war, England being inclined to peace from enmity to France. At the same time he held out hopes to them that further advantages granted to the Prince of Orange might reconcile them with the King of England. He warned them that in default of this double satisfaction the treaty between France and England, in which he had hitherto refused to believe, would take effect.

The States of Holland and the States-General allowed themselves to be again duped by these illusions. The Grand Pensionary represented to them that, on the eve of an imminent rupture with France, no concession which might rally England to the alliance of the republic was to be regretted. He proposed therefore to intimate to Downing that the States-General yielded to the question of the saluting the flag according to the King of England's claim, adding that they considered it as a mark of deference to a potent monarch, the faithful ally of the republic, and as involving no prejudice to their freedom of commerce and navigation. To secure to the republic the benefit of a compliance thus pushed to its furthest limit, De Witt, faithful to the policy which had dictated all his despatches to Boreel, instructed the ambassador to declare that the States-General would pledge themselves to no such engagement unless assured by the King of England of the execution of the Triple Alliance, or without first obtaining his promise of assistance in the event of France attacking the United Provinces. If such advances should not produce a favourable response, Charles must renounce all hope of deceiving them as to his intentions.

Downing did not hesitate to refuse. He declared that the offers came too late, and asserting that his powers had just been revoked, quitted the Hague, not venturing to remain there exposed to the vengeance of the populace, who looked upon him as the foe of all alliance between England and the republic. This precipitancy did not suit the views of the King of England. Charles feared that the States, if once

convinced that they had no further terms to keep, might press forward the equipment of their ships and get the start of him by a declaration of war followed up by a prompt attack. To gain time, he disavowed the proceedings of his ambassador, and carried dissimulation so far as to throw him into prison and deprive him of his office. Boreel allowed himself to be deceived by Downing's temporary disgrace, and still continued to encourage the illusions of the States. Although he dared not refrain from making known to them the growing demands of Charles, he endeavoured to persuade them that an ambassador extraordinary might have sufficient credit to make the King more tractable, and he persisted in writing to them that the arrival of such an envoy might bring about a suspension of the engagements between the courts of England and France.

The States were unwilling to turn a deaf ear to this last appeal. They still hoped that this persistency might bring back the English nation to the Dutch alliance, and thus prevent a declaration of war. Having first offered the special mission to Beverningh, who, expecting no success from it, refused the appointment, they made choice of Meerman, who had already been their representative in London. They instructed him to renew their offers concerning the flag, and to let it be known that they would go so far as to dismiss Admiral van Ghent and replace him by Tromp: this last concession having been agreed to in spite of the opposition of the States of Holland. They entrusted Meerman also with a letter addressed to Charles, in which they informed him of the resolutions just passed in favour of the Prince of Orange, by his appointment as captain and admiral-general, hoping that this concession in favour of the King's nephew might prevent a rupture. To help forward the success of the negotiations, they authorised, but too late, the employment of considerable sums intended directly for the King's privy purse. They hoped by these means to gain the neutrality and mediation of England, if not her assistance. 'The Dutch,' writes a correspondent to Condé, 'are in consternation at the English ambassador's determination to take his leave, and they have sent off expresses to

London with many offers of submission. It is not yet known what may be the result of all this.

In order not to expose themselves to a fresh affront, the States had desired Meerman to await the effect of his first steps before declaring himself as ambassador extraordinary. Meerman, however, lost no time in demanding an audience, at which he presented himself accompanied by Boreel. He announced to Charles that the States had instructed him to demand the execution of the treaties, and to come to an understanding about the flag. The King evaded all reply, and merely expressed surprise at not receiving a signed paper. The two ambassadors hastened to transmit that which they had drawn up to the English commissioners, Arlington and Lauderdale, and requested them to examine it first. The latter replied haughtily that it was not their business to draw up diplomatic notes; and on the day fixed for the conference, taking no account of the written engagement which settled the question of the salute of the flag according to the English demand, they broke off the interview, declaring that the time for negotiation was past.

Thus was notified to the States-General the defection of Charles II. All the efforts made by the Grand Pensionary had failed, and the alliance entered into four years previously between the United Provinces and England was now to be followed by a declaration of war. The league which they had hoped to oppose to Louis XIV. could no longer protect them, and they were in their turn threatened by the vengeance of the King of France with a coalition which must place them at his mercy. Having freed themselves from the yoke of Spain, against whom they had entered into a most unequal conflict, they were now to be reduced to defend their independence against the two most powerful monarchies of Europe, to whom it seemed that they were fated to succumb, but against whom they were to maintain an indomitable resistance.

CHAPTER XI.

DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION AND MILITARY WEAKNESS—ALLIANCES
AND PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENCE.

Fallacious security of the States-General—They let slip from them the Swedish alliance—Van Haren's negotiations—Treaty of neutrality between Sweden and France—Engagements of the Emperor of Germany with Louis XIV.—The German Princes won over to the French alliance—Negotiations of the States-General with the Princes of the House of Brunswick—Treaty of the King of France with the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne—Vain attempts of John de Witt to assist the town of Cologne against the Elector—The States-General obtain the support of the Elector of Brandenburg—Negotiations of their envoy Amerongen—Diplomatic diversion attempted by the Elector of Mayence—The conquest of Egypt suggested to Louis XIV.—Relations of the States-General with the court of Spain—Embassy of Beverningh to Madrid—Treaty of assistance—Conferences at Brussels—Great part taken in them by the Grand Pensionary and his brother—Neglect of their defences by the United Provinces—Disarmament—Disputes between the States of Holland and the States-General as to the disbanding of some companies—State of the army—Military weakness—Restoration of the highest commands—Prince John Maurice of Nassau and Major-General Wurtz—Imprudent confidence of the Grand Pensionary—His tardy commencement of the defensive preparations—Slowness of the deliberations—Opposition of Zealand—Concord restored by De Witt—Financial measures—Unsuccessful attempts to create new taxes—The combinations of annuities studied by De Witt—His reports to the States of Holland—Successive loans—Creation of pecuniary resources—Result of the financial administration of the Grand Pensionary—Pacification of internal divisions undertaken by De Witt—Fagel appointed Secretary of the States-General—Van Beuningen sent as ambassador to London—Hoofd, burgomaster of Amsterdam—Renewed disputes—Proposal to appoint the Prince of Orange captain-general—Impolitic resistance offered by De Witt—The States of Holland split into two parties—Vote for the commission of the captain-general—Disagreement on the question of a life-command—Compromise arranged by De Witt—Proclamation of the Prince of Orange as captain-general—Public rejoicings—Harmony only restored in appearance—Organisation of the military staff—The deputies in the camp—The command of the fleet continued to Ruyter—His lieutenant-admirals—Cornelius de Witt delegated to him by the States-General—Committee for naval affairs—It is presided over by John de Witt—Naval armaments—Effective force of

the army—New levies—De Witt's repeated demands for them—Reserve forces—Insufficiency of the defensive preparations—Last years of the domestic life of John de Witt—His widowerhood—His house—His family relations—His children—Their education—Subsequent fate of his sons and daughters—Cornelius de Witt at Dordrecht—Offices and honours conferred upon him—His character—His relations with John de Witt—His wife, Maria van Berkel—His children—Common fate of the two brothers.

THE States-General had taken no measures to turn aside the dangers which threatened them. They had too easily persuaded themselves that they had only to preserve the Netherlands to Spain in order to secure the independence of the United Provinces. Believing that the safety of the republic was assured, they neglected to profit by their financial resources to obtain the protection and assistance of their allies. They would have liked Spain to pay the costs of their defence, and the Grand Pensionary remarks sorrowfully on their refusal to consent to pecuniary engagements. 'The conviction is forced upon me,' he writes, 'that their High Mightinesses will not consent to promise subsidies to anyone, unless, in the event of war, the troops for which the subsidies were promised were put into the field at once, and that they will never, in time of peace, merely for fear of a rupture, take a definite resolution beforehand to make any preliminary sacrifice of money.' 'It is the character of the Dutch,' he writes in another letter, 'unless danger is staring them in the face to be disinclined to make any sacrifices for their own defence.' He protested that he had to deal with people 'who were liberal to profusion when they ought to be sparing, and were often economical to avarice when they ought to spend their money.'

The States were equally parsimonious as to bribing the principal ministers at certain courts who might have been of use to them. They were suspicious of venal services, and whilst the Kings of France and England maintained, even in the Federal Assembly, spies who had been convicted in a court of justice of giving up official papers; whilst they surrounded the deputies with such a network of intrigue that, as a measure of precaution, it was necessary to forbid the latter living or dining at inns; the States-General thought it

extravagant to employ those presents and largesses which, according to the code of diplomatic morals of that day, were effectual and often indispensable means for the success of negotiations. One of their most sagacious ministers, De Groot, did not hesitate, in his private correspondence, to blame this conduct. 'We are very wrong,' he writes to Wicquefort, 'to expect good offices from everybody, and to confer benefits upon no one. This rigid virtue which it is desired to practise in Holland is, no doubt, very proper; but it is not well-timed, and is suitable only to those who can stand alone, without need of other aid. France is much wiser; she gives on all sides, and everywhere buys what she cannot conquer.'

This policy of ill-judged economy was to cost the States-General dear, and was fated to lose them the alliance of Sweden, for which Louis XIV. outbid them. The court of Sweden, during the king's minority, was a prey to intrigues and always ready to be bought by the highest bidder. 'Jealous of a share in the affairs of Europe,' writes Pomponne, 'Sweden delighted in seeing herself sought on all sides, without the intention of entering into a real engagement with anyone, and found her advantage in such a line of conduct.' 'When one has made any stay at Stockholm,' writes the French ambassador, Courtin, 'the vanity of these northern Gascons becomes pretty well known, and the extent also of their necessities.' During his embassy at Stockholm, De Groot had never ceased to write home in the same strain. 'Matters are at such a pass,' he writes, 'they must have money and that from foreign sources, and whoever provides them with it will carry the day over whoever does not.' The United Provinces were to discover to their cost how well-grounded was this anticipation.

The participation of Sweden in the Triple Alliance had encouraged the States-General in their illusions, and her first refusal of the pecuniary offers of Louis XIV. had completely reassured them. They gave themselves up to a fallacious security, and recalling Peter de Groot from Stockholm to send him as ambassador to France, neglected his advice, and contented themselves with being represented in Sweden by

their ordinary resident, Nicholas Heinsius, from whom little service could be expected. Son of the great philologer of the seventeenth century, Heinsius had devoted himself from his boyhood to Latin poetry, was famed for his editions of Virgil, Ovid, and Claudian, and was more concerned to render a brilliant idea into good Latin verse than to watch the proceedings of foreign ministers. Content to have held for sixteen years the same diplomatic post, which he owed to the patronage of Queen Christina, and which brought him a salary of 4,000 florins, he was bent upon maintaining himself there by giving the most reassuring information in his despatches, but he had no influence at the court of Stockholm nor any knowledge of what was taking place there.

Convinced that the assistance of Sweden was necessary to them to secure the safety of the Netherlands and thus to support the Spanish monarchy, the States-General had imperiously demanded from Spain the payment of the sums that she had promised to the Swedish Government, under the terms of the conventions of the Triple Alliance. Thanks to the urgent and skilful persuasions of their ambassador in Spain, Beverningh, they even obtained payment, in anticipation, of the subsidies which were to provide for the despatch of a Swedish contingent, in case of a renewal of the war between Spain and France; and they persuaded themselves that they might in future dispose of Sweden at the cost of the Spanish Government. Their expectations were soon to be deceived. Sweden having got all she could expect from Spain, and not reckoning upon pecuniary assistance from the States-General, began to look to France for relief.

With this object the Grand Chancellor requested Louis XIV. to send back to Stockholm his former ambassador, the Marquis de Pomponne, and declared to the French resident that if France would treat with them in accordance with former procedure, he saw every probability of a great success. Louis XIV. eagerly welcomed this unexpected overture. Pomponne was summoned into Flanders, where the King of France was making a military inspection, informed of his appointment as ambassador to Sweden, and sent back to the Hague to take

leave of the States-General. His instructions, minutely prepared by Lionne, acquainted him with the line of negotiation which he was to adopt with the Swedish Government. He was desired to obtain, in consideration of French subsidies, and by means of pecuniary gratifications which he was authorised to distribute, the assistance of a force of 16,000 men for the purpose of taking up arms against any princes of the Empire who should attempt to come to the aid of the United Provinces.

On his arrival at Stockholm, Pomponne opened a conference with the Grand Chancellor, Magnus de la Gardie, who, faithful to the French alliance, received his proposals favourably. The Chancellor had, however, a powerful adversary in the Grand Treasurer, Stein Bilk, who was under the influence of the Spanish ambassador, Fernando Nuñez. The commissioners appointed by the Senate took fright at the projects for the destruction of the republic. Alarmed at the ambitious designs of Louis, they began to delay and temporise. Pomponne skilfully avoided any appearance of haste, and to further the issue of the negotiations consented not to insist upon a rupture between the States-General and Sweden, and renounced a demand which would have opposed an insuperable obstacle in the way of any agreement.

This difficulty having been disposed of, the Grand Chancellor thought he might confidently appeal to the Senate. But in a formal sitting at which the young King Charles XII. took his place, the debate which arose nearly upset everything again. 'It was necessary,' the Chancellor declared to Pomponne, 'to fight hard to put down the senators who were opposed to French offers. The promise of assistance of a force of 16,000 men, which was to be despatched into Germany at the first requisition of the King of France, was at last given. But it was made subject to the grant of a subsidy of 600,000 crowns, which Pomponne was only empowered to offer in the event of Sweden bringing her contingent into the field, failing which he only offered 200,000 crowns. After conferences vainly prolonged for a week, being no longer able to put off entering upon his office of Secretary of State for Foreign

Affairs, Pomponne endeavoured before leaving Stockholm to induce the Senate to come to a definite resolution upon the eventual clauses of the treaty. But he was obliged to consent to the postponement of its signature until his appointed successor, Courtin, should have received the King's orders either to conclude the negotiations or to break them off.

The alliance of Sweden with France was thus held in suspense, and the States-General might still hope to avert it. The Grand Pensionary was not taken unawares by the news of its imminent accomplishment. The letters which De Groot had written to him before leaving Stockholm had acquainted him with the secret negotiations of the court of France. He had in consequence never ceased to call upon the States-General to take measures to preserve the alliance which threatened to slip through their fingers. It was necessary without further delay to fill up the vacancy in the embassy. As Van Beuningen refused it, Cornelius de Witt consented to accept it. But he had incurred the jealousy of some deputies of the Assembly of Holland, who were enemies of himself and his family. Envious of the town of Dordrecht, of which the Grand Pensionary and his brother, the Secretary of the Council of State, Slingelandt, and the former Secretary of the States-General, Ruysch, were all natives, they ironically remarked that it seemed intended to give to that town alone the privilege of producing great men, and they required that the choice should be left to other towns. The States of Holland could find no other candidate to present, but Cornelius de Witt, once rejected, would not let himself be tempted by any fresh offers. The States-General then addressed themselves to Van Haren, deputy of Friesland, who had every claim to their confidence.

At the age of twenty-four Van Haren had been a member of the Grand Assembly of 1650, which had changed the government of the United Provinces, and had since filled several important offices. Successively appointed Grand Master of Domains and member of the Council of State, he had been charged, during the Northern war, with negotiations for peace between Denmark and Sweden, and elected by

the States of Friesland as their deputy in ordinary to the States-General. After accompanying De Witt to the Texel, during the second war with England, he had been sent on a mission to the Elector of Brandenburg. His embassy to Sweden was now to give him an opportunity of employing in the service of his country the resources of great intelligence and tried patriotism.

His instructions directed him to inform the Swedish Government of the causes for complaint and alarm that France had given to the United Provinces, by putting an interdict upon their commerce and threatening them with an approaching rupture. He was to represent to them that it was the Triple Alliance which had exposed the States-General to the resentment of Louis XIV., and that, accordingly, it gave the republic the right to appeal to the allies for assistance. To obtain this Van Haren was authorised to offer subsidies that should be at least equal to those promised by the King of France, and was empowered to promise a sum of 720,000 crowns to be paid in four half-yearly instalments. The States-General also took upon themselves the final instalments due of the war subsidies promised by the court of Madrid to Sweden for the preservation of the Netherlands, and of which Spain seemed unable to continue the payment. These proposals, tardy though they were, very nearly succeeded and seemed likely to produce a change in the aspect of affairs, by breaking off the engagements entered into by Sweden with the King of France. On the urgent advice of Pomponne, Louis determined to forestall them by empowering Courtin, his new ambassador at Stockholm, to satisfy the demands of the Swedish Government, and he instructed him to double the subsidy offered to Sweden, and raise it to 400,000 crowns.

Van Haren did not despair yet of achieving success in the mission entrusted to him. In his conferences with the commissioners from the Senate who were charged to negotiate with him, he pointed out to them the aggressive preparations of Louis XIV., and the dangers incurred by all Europe from his ambition and his contempt for treaties. He made the most of the alliance concluded by the States-General with

Spain, and of that for which they were in treaty with the Elector of Brandenburg, alluded to the opposition of the English nation to the alliance between Charles and Louis, and urged the Swedish regency not to be indifferent to a cause which was their own. Having received private information that a report had been agreed upon in favour of the signature of a treaty with France, he induced the envoys of Spain, of Brandenburg, and of several German princes to make an urgent remonstrance to the commissioners to dissuade them from the step on which they had resolved. At the same time, profiting by the latitude allowed him, to be used only at the last extremity, he offered as the price of Swedish intervention 720,000 crowns yearly, to be paid in a lump sum and in advance. When the commissioners reported this proposal to the Senate on the following day, the partisans of France appeared disconcerted. The Grand Chancellor, whose habit it was in difficult cases to retire from the scene, prepared to leave Stockholm for the country. The champions of the Triple Alliance resumed confidence. The Senate appeared disposed to accept the offers of Van Haren, and only sought a pretext to release themselves from their engagements with France. 'I did not think,' writes Courtin, 'that I ought to commit myself any further with people who have no respect for their written or spoken word.'

It seemed then as if Van Haren might reckon upon the most unexpected chances of success. His hopes would perhaps have been better founded if he could have secured by liberality the good-will of the Grand Chancellor. He complained later 'that he had not been instructed to offer him any considerable present, although it was only by such means that he could expect to obtain his good offices.' He had, besides, not received sufficient powers to settle finally the various concessions relative to trade and navigation which Sweden desired to obtain from the United Provinces. Unable to grant these without asking and obtaining permission from the States, he could merely promise that 'the reply should be such as they would desire.' These delays allowed the French ambassador to receive fresh instructions, by which he was

ordered to give the commissioners the choice between the two words 'sign' and 'go,' and himself to act accordingly. The Senate having again met, Van Haren vainly endeavoured to secure the neutrality of Sweden. Thanks to the urgent advice of the Grand Chancellor, the French ambassador succeeded in obtaining consent to the treaty, as it had previously been concluded with Pomponne. Three weeks later it was ratified at Versailles and became definitive.

'We shall have,' writes the Dutch ambassador, sadly, 'to suffice to ourselves in the first campaign.' Van Haren had only succeeded in thwarting the French ambassador's measures for a time; he could not foil them entirely. Courtin, in announcing his success, acknowledges himself 'that the difficulties he had hitherto encountered were flowers in comparison with the thorns he had recently met with.' By averting a rupture between Sweden and the United Provinces, Van Haren had, however, notwithstanding the apparent failure of his embassy, rendered a signal service to the States-General. He had secured for them the continuance of diplomatic relations with the court of Stockholm, which were soon to enable him to bring about a change in the policy of Sweden favourable to the republic.

None the less, the defection of Sweden completed the isolation of the United Provinces. It was the aim which Louis had never ceased to pursue throughout all his negotiations. He had succeeded in it by the promises, either of neutrality or of assistance, that he had obtained from the Emperor of Germany and the German princes on the one hand, and on the other from the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster.

The States-General were abandoned by the Emperor in spite of the fluctuations of the French alliance at Vienna, of which they had failed to take advantage. Leopold I. had only desired to join the Triple Alliance in order to guarantee to Spain the possession of the Netherlands. From the moment when Louis XIV. threatened not the Netherlands but the United Provinces, he had no wish to get himself into trouble by assisting them, notwithstanding the urgent remonstrances of their envoy, Hamel Bruyninx. He preferred to assure the tranquillity of

his dominions, threatened, not only by an invasion of the Turks, but by a revolt in Hungary which he had just put down by means of the most sanguinary executions. But the haughty refusal with which Louis XIV. had met the representations of Count Windischgrätz in favour of the Duke of Lorraine, who had been despoiled of his dominions by the King of France, and the secret encouragement given by the French to the disturbances in Hungary, had irritated and alienated the court of Vienna. While the negotiations were still being protracted, the intercourse between the two courts had almost been broken off by a violent quarrel between the Chevalier de Gremonville, the ambassador of Louis XIV., and Prince Leopold Lobkowitz, Duke of Sagan, the Emperor's prime minister. Their reconciliation, brought about by a public apology from Prince Lobkowitz to Gremonville, enabled the French ambassador to overcome the difficulties placed in the way of any project of alliance by the excessive demands of the court of Vienna. In consideration of the satisfaction given to the Emperor on the subject of the guarantee of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle promised by Leopold to Spain, Gremonville obtained the signature of a secret treaty of neutrality. The Emperor undertook to give no assistance to the States-General, provided that, if the King of France attacked them, he should abstain from carrying the war into the imperial dominions.

The gradually narrowing circle in which Louis was seeking to inclose the United Provinces was completing their investment. Whilst he won from them the Swedish alliance, and hindered the Emperor from coming to their assistance, he was securing to himself the co-operation of most of the German princes by taking them into his pay. The valuable collection of their original receipts, carefully preserved to this day, furnishes a list of his pensioners. He held at his disposal the whole Electoral College of the empire. Besides his negotiations and conventions with the Archbishop of Mayence, the Archbishop of Cologne, and the Duke of Brandenburg, he had attached to his interests all the other Electors: Charles Philip van Legen, Bishop of Trèves, John George II. Elector of

Saxony, Frederick Maria, Elector of Bavaria, to whom he had secretly promised that his daughter should marry the Dauphin, and the Elector Palatine, Charles Louis, whose daughter had lately become the second wife of the Duke of Orleans. Eberhard III., Duke of Würtemberg, Philip William, Duke of Neuburg, for whom Louis had obtained the restitution of the citadel of Juliers and whose pretensions to the throne of Poland he had supported, and the Bishops of Spire and Strasburg had all been won over either by promises or money by the King of France.

His promises and his bounty found a less ready reception with the Princes of the House of Brunswick-Luneburg. The eldest, George William, Duke of Zell, and his youngest brother Augustus, Bishop of Osnaburg—whose wife Sophia was the patroness and correspondent of Leibnitz, and whose son became King of England under the name of George I.—had long since declared themselves in favour of the United Provinces. They had come to the assistance of the republic not only during the second English war, but also during the invasion of the Spanish Netherlands by Louis XIV. But the States-General had been unable to secure continuance of their help by conceding demands which seemed to them too exorbitant. Ever since the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle they had withheld from the Princes of Luneburg the excessive subsidies demanded by them for keeping under arms a contingent of troops ready for the field. The States attempted to bring them to more moderate terms by the intervention of an agent who had been long in their confidence, Captain Brasset, son-in-law of Hoofdt, the burgomaster of Amsterdam. To procure the success of their negotiations, they were eager in their support of one of the Brunswick Princes, Rudolf Augustus, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbittel, in his complaints against the Bishop of Münster, with whom he had been engaged in some frontier disputes. The folly of the deputies sent to represent them in the conferences for the settlement of this difference, deprived them of the advantage of a mediation which they had offered but had failed to profit by on account of idle quarrels about precedence.

Far from gaining the Duke of Wolfenbuttel to their cause, they went near to alienating him entirely by taking the part of the town of Brunswick, which had appealed to them when its privileges were threatened by the Duke. Without venturing to come to the assistance of the town, they sent orders to recall such of their officers as had accompanied the Duke to the siege, at which the Prince of Orange was making his first essay in arms. All these incidents were skilfully made use of for the advantage of France by one of the most able of the French diplomatists, Gourville, whom Louis XIV. had employed to use his influence with the Princes of Luneburg. The Duke of Zell, however, desiring to justify his reputation for fidelity to his promises, refused to enter into any engagements with the King of France against the republic, and the Duke of Wolfenbuttel maintained the same reserve. But John Frederick, Duke of Hanover, who had become a convert to the Catholic faith and had married a daughter of Anne of Gonzaga, Princess Palatine, did not hesitate to conclude a treaty with Louis, which under an appearance of neutrality assured his co-operation to the King of France. In consideration of a subsidy of 10,000 crowns per month, he allowed the French troops to pass through his territory. Three months later the Bishop of Osnaburg, of whom the United Provinces had thought themselves secure, was detached from their cause and gained over to France by Louis XIV.'s envoy, M. de Verjus.

The States-General could expect nothing but open and even more dangerous hostility from their two other neighbours, the Bishop of Münster and the Archbishop of Cologne, whom the King of France was about to adopt not only as allies, but also as auxiliaries. The Bishop of Münster had never been sincerely reconciled to the United Provinces, and had not lost sight of the plans of conquest in which he had failed during their last war with England. Checked by the intervention of Louis XIV., he reckoned upon profiting by the resentment of the King of France against the States-General to allow free course to his restless ambition. 'He has obtained from the States of his dominions a considerable sum,' writes a

correspondent to De Witt, 'under pretence of founding a university at Münster, and he will employ it to raise troops rather than to pay professors and learned men, for whom he has no such liking as for the first.'

Always ready to intervene in any dispute that might favour the aggrandisement of his bishopric, the Bishop skilfully took advantage of the quarrel that had arisen between his neighbours the Count and Countess of Bentheim to declare himself against the Count, and to garrison his castle. The States-General, who had taken the part of the Countess of Bentheim, feared that the Bishop might be in this way seeking occasion for a rupture, and thought it necessary to put the Dutch frontier into a state of defence. False reports having reached them that they were threatened by the episcopal forces, they hastily despatched to the front several companies from the garrisons in Holland. The alarm having proved unfounded, the States of Holland, desirous of keeping on good terms with the Bishop, imprudently resumed their former confidence. The Grand Pensionary even blamed the despatch of troops, which had been ordered by the Council of State in his absence, and asked for their recall. In vain did Prince John Maurice of Nassau, from his residence at Cleves, whence he could keep an eye on the Bishopric of Münster, give warning of the Bishop's military preparations. He could not succeed in getting any steps taken to compel him to disarm before the Kings of France and England were ready to come to his assistance.

The States merely sent one of their deputies, Amerongen, a member of the nobility of the Province of Utrecht, to visit the Bishop and ascertain his disposition towards them. On his arrival at Münster, Amerongen found the Bishop completely in the hands of the French envoy, De Verjus, and he sent word home that the country was swarming with troops ready for active service. In the hope of throwing the States-General off the scent, the Bishop sent to the Hague the president of his council of war, Bentinck, charging him with protestations of pacific intentions which deceived the States, and by

the advice of the Grand Pensionary the offer of negotiations was not refused.

But the Bishop had only engaged in them in order to gain time. Unknown to the States-General, his plenipotentiaries signed two treaties with the envoy of Louis XIV.: one, which was intended to be made public, promised neutrality on his part; the other, which was to be kept secret, guaranteed his active co-operation, and pledged him to put into the field a body of troops whose number was fixed at 9,000 men, in consideration of enormous subsidies and the assignment of some strong places. The Bishop of Münster continued, however, to ask for still more advantageous arrangements, and Louvois writes in the following year: 'If the King followed his first impulse, he would reply that he has done too much already and does not choose to do anything more.' Louis, however, never thinking any precaution superfluous, consented to the payment of 2,000 crowns per month to the Bishop of Paderborn, coadjutor to the Bishop of Münster, and thus prevented him from rousing any opposition to the latter in the Chapter, and deprived John de Witt of all advantage from the secret intelligences which he had contrived to maintain. Unable any longer to hide from themselves the danger that threatened them, the States-General reinforced their frontier garrisons, while their formidable neighbour, feeling concealment to be no longer necessary, boasted of 'being soon able, like a new Hercules, club in hand, to crush the republic with his blows.'

While securing the co-operation of the Bishop of Münster, Louis made use of the Bishopric of Cologne as an advanced post which would enable him easily to invade the United Provinces. Forced to respect the neutrality of the Netherlands, in order not to endanger his alliance with England, this was the only road open to him, and if De Witt could have obtained a hearing for his far-sighted counsels, the King of France would have found this closed. Maximilian Henry of Bavaria, Elector and Archbishop of Cologne and Bishop of Liège, was the more likely to accept the offers of Louis that his advisers were the Bishop of Strasburg, Francis Egon of Fürstemberg, and his brother William of Fürstem-

berg, whose valuable services had already been secured by the King of France. The Elector of Cologne entertained, moreover, the most hostile feelings towards the States-General, and fresh frontier disputes had recently reawakened his old enmity. He had not forgiven their occupation of the town of Rhyneberg, which the Dutch had taken from the Spaniards in the War of Independence, and of which he claimed the restoration, although it had ceased to form a part of his diocese so far back as the fifteenth century. Suddenly called upon to give it up, the States-General, by the prudent advice of De Witt, consented to treat with the Elector's minister, Bouchorst, and a few months later, in March 1670, offered him complete satisfaction on condition of the conclusion of a defensive alliance. But the Elector sent them word by the Bishop of Strasburg 'that the time was past for speaking of it,' and thus left them no doubt as to the engagements he was negotiating with France.

The danger of this co-operation, so threatening to the safety of the republic, might have been averted by the States if they could have secured to Cologne its independence, which that town was now defending against the Elector by an appeal to its privileges as an imperial city. In order to prevent his getting possession of it and handing it over to the King of France, the Grand Pensionary hastened to take advantage of the quarrel, and obtained authority from the States of Holland to introduce secretly into the town some engineers and officers, amongst them Colonel Bampfield, in whom he trusted completely, and the Quartermaster-General Pain et Vin. A regiment of 1,500 men, of which the command was given to Bampfield, was raised at the cost of the States in order to repel any attack in the event of the Elector assuming the offensive.

Meanwhile the States had recourse to negotiations to disarm him. While still represented at his court by Amerongen, they sent to Boulogne two commissioners, Van Sypesteyn, a relative of the Grand Pensionary, and Van der Tocht, a deputy of their Assembly, and they addressed to the Emperor a most urgent appeal in favour of Cologne, which, as an

Imperial city, had a right to his protection. The Elector, not wishing to precipitate a rupture before his treaties with France were signed, accepted the mediation of the Marquis de Grana, the commissioner from the court of Vienna, but still continued his preparations for attack by concentrating round Cologne his forces, whose numbers were swelled by the French deserters whom Louis allowed to go over to his service. To convince the States of the danger that threatened them, Bampfied repaired to the Hague and informed them that the resources at the disposal of the magistrates for the defence of the town were inadequate. Fresh reinforcements were urgently called for, and the demand, strongly supported by De Witt, was submitted to the States-General. The deputies of Holland, joined by those of five other provinces, expressed the greatest eagerness to assist Cologne. They declared themselves ready to despatch thither at once thirteen companies of foot and three troops of horse. Had this intervention been decided upon in time it would have dealt an irreparable blow to the designs of Louis, and even now the salvation of the republic might depend upon it.

Unhappily, internal dissensions prevented the succour of Cologne. Zealand, in order to be revenged for the opposition of Holland to the reviving pretensions of the Orange party, refused to consent to the despatch of troops until Holland should have laid upon foreign grain a duty by which Zealand hoped largely to profit, as it would secure a better price for her own harvests. Holland could not submit to these fiscal demands. By raising the price of bread to her own people, she would have altered to their prejudice the conditions of cheap subsistence which enabled them to endure the burden of taxation. In vain did the Grand Pensionary urge the most convincing arguments to prove the iniquity and danger of a contest so fatal to the interests of the republic—Zealand remained inflexible, and persevered in obstinate opposition.

The defenders of the town, believing themselves to be abandoned, resigned themselves to submission, and Cornelius de Witt, arriving at Cologne on board a Dutch vessel, could but testify to their discouragement. The Elector sought

to profit by this state of things to induce the magistrates to consent as a preliminary to the departure of Colonel Bampfied's regiment from the town, and the entrance in its stead of troops from the circle of Lower Saxony. The burgomaster at first evaded these proposals. Feeling convinced, however, that they would not long be rejected, De Witt made a last effort to encourage the magistrates and townspeople. Assailed on all sides by the murmurs of the other provinces Zealand was forced to yield, and the Grand Pensionary at last succeeded in obtaining in the States-General an accordance too long delayed. He took advantage of it to draw up with the ministers of Spain and of the Empire a scheme by which the States were to send two more regiments to Cologne, to which the Emperor was to add 1,500 foot, and the King of Spain three regiments of horse. This convention, which might otherwise have been effectual, was too late to change the course of events. The party within Cologne which had been gained over to the interests of the Elector and of the King of France, had not remained inactive, and the election of a new burgomaster, Van den Heuvel, who was in its interest, secured the success of its manœuvres. From the moment that Van den Heuvel entered upon his office he openly supported the proposals of the Elector, insisting upon the departure of the Dutch regiments, and appealing to the guarantee of the King of France as sufficient to secure the privileges of the town. His advice was finally listened to by the townspeople, who feared to be reduced to the last extremity before the promised reinforcements should arrive. The terms of an agreement were hastily settled, and the King of France, by getting rid of the Dutch troops, secured to himself free entrance from the Rhine into the territories of the United Provinces. 'By not sending troops into Cologne,' writes Chantilly to Condé, 'the States have for the last three months been letting slip the chance that might have saved them.'

This difficulty having been smoothed away, Louis lost no time in taking the diplomatic steps which completed his preparations for war. Six months before, he had concluded a preliminary treaty by which he secured not merely the passage

of provisions through the diocese of Liège, but also the necessary magazines for stores and ammunition for the French troops, in consideration of a subsidy of 10,000 crowns monthly. He had also promised to restore Rhynberg to the Elector and to give up Maestricht to him as soon as these places had been conquered from the United Provinces. By a second treaty, in January 1672, which was an offensive league, the Elector undertook to put into the field an auxiliary force of seventeen or eighteen thousand men, and to maintain them with a further subsidy of 28,000 crowns per month. Four thousand French soldiers, who took oath to him and wore the electoral scarf, were placed under his orders for the first four months of the campaign, and 20,000 men were to be sent to his assistance if he were attacked. In consideration of this promise of assistance, and on payment of 400,000 livres to the Elector, the King of France obtained by a final treaty, two or three weeks after the second, the skilfully concealed cession of the town of Nuys, which, from its situation at the confluence of the river Erft and the Rhine, made him master of an important strategic position. Under the pretence of an exchange with the French soldiers, who according to a preconcerted plan had deserted and taken service with the electoral troops, and to whom the King of France granted permission to re-enter his army, 1,400 Swiss, under the orders of a countryman of their own, Colonel Stoppa, took possession of the fortress which was to serve as a base of operations to the French army.

To insure the success of these negotiations, Louis XIV. had confided in no one but Louvois. The latter had repaired to Cologne to pave the way for the submission of the town by conferences with the municipality, in which he openly announced the coalition of France and England against the republic, in order to preclude all expectation of assistance from the States-General. He had besides when at Bruhl placed himself in direct communication with the Elector and his first minister, the Bishop of Strasburg, in order to secure the prompt execution of those clauses of the treaty which he desired to keep secret, but which Bampffield communicated to the Grand Pensionary. The preliminaries for the invasion of

the United Provinces, of which De Groot also gave information to De Witt, were thus arranged, and the French army might in all security set out on the first stages of its march.

Surrounded by enemies and abandoned by those who should have been their defenders, the States-General had not lost heart. De Witt had never ceased to warn the courts of Europe of the danger which threatened them. 'France,' he declared to Wicquefort, the agent of the Dukes of Brunswick-Luneburg, 'cannot increase her power without becoming dangerous to all the rest of Europe, and after the conquest of the United Provinces there will be nothing to prevent her universal domination.' Whilst the Grand Pensionary was vainly renewing negotiations with Switzerland and Denmark relative to the levying of troops and to military assistance, he obtained from Berlin and Madrid promises of effectual support.

The Elector of Brandenburg and the Queen-Regent of Spain were making ready to come forward in aid of the republic in order to protect her against invasion by the King of France, and it was to these two alliances that she owed her deliverance. In successfully concluding them the States-General found a most useful assistant in Baron Lisola, the Imperial envoy at the Hague, who remained persistently faithful to their cause. He had been one of the first to take alarm at the fate which menaced the United Provinces, and, as the danger came nearer, he requested fresh conferences with the Grand Pensionary. 'I have a multitude of things of the highest importance to say to you,' he writes to him; 'I know how occupied you are and do not venture to interrupt you, but I know also that, however important your business may be, a quarter of an hour will be as usefully spent between you and me as in any other matter.' The independence of the United Provinces appeared to him the best guarantee against the subjection of the other States, and he was anxious to secure protection for them that Europe might be guarded against the danger of a universal monarchy.

No one could give them more effectual assistance than the Elector of Brandenburg. Frederick William had acquired

an uncontested supremacy among the German princes, since, at the close of his successful war against John Casimir, King of Poland, he had added to the dominions he possessed in the empire the sovereignty of ducal Prussia, which he had formerly held as a fief from Poland. His possessions now extended from the duchy of Cleves on the hither side of the Rhine to the farther bank of the Vistula. Ambitious and persevering, Frederick William had no wish to remain dependent upon either the Empire of Germany or France, and was preparing, if need be sword in hand, to play the part of arbitrator. His court at Berlin was a place of meeting for all the negotiators of Europe, while at the same time he was giving his most assiduous attention to the recruiting, provisioning, and officering of his troops, and was converting his principality into a military power, thus preparing for his descendants the destiny which was to insure the greatness of Prussia.

Hitherto the United Provinces had not had much cause to count upon his assistance. The good understanding between the two governments had long been troubled by mutual jealousy and suspicion. Frederick William was constantly complaining of the garrisons which had been placed in several fortified towns in his duchy of Cleves, such as Emerich, Orsoy, and Wesel. The States had taken these places from the Spaniards and refused to give them up, because by them they were masters of the Rhine and the safety of their territory was thus secured. Frederick William considered himself the enemy of the party now governing the United Provinces. When, according to the treaty of Cleves, he was preparing to assist them against the Bishop of Münster during the second English war, his ministers declared that, while aiding the Dutch against their enemies abroad, his appearance in the field would be a signal for a revolution at home in favour of his nephew, the Prince of Orange. 'As soon as the Elector sets his troops in motion,' they wrote, 'the Grand Pensionary will have little voice in the matter, because measures will be taken to deprive him of the authority and power that he has arrogated to himself.'

This avowed hostility prevented De Witt from favouring

a treaty which the Elector besides made conditional on the payment of fresh subsidies, and particularly on the restitution of the Rhine fortresses. An alliance concluded upon such terms seemed to him more burdensome than profitable to the republic. Accordingly, when Amerongen was charged to represent the United Provinces at Berlin, his departure was further postponed until the end of the year 1671, although his presence at the Elector's court seemed necessary in order to make up for lost time. 'For this reason,' writes the French agent Bernard, who still remained at the Hague, 'orders have been at last sent to him to use all speed.'

The suspicions which had kept Frederick William at arm's length were soon proved unfounded by his generous intervention in favour of the republic. As soon as Louis XIV. informed him of his designs against the United Provinces, the first intimation of which was conveyed to him by one of the most skilful of the French diplomatic agents, Verjus, Comte de Crécy, he manifested his apprehensions. In vain the King of France believed that he had bound him to his cause by obtaining from him a promise not to place any obstacle in the way of his invasion of the Netherlands. The Elector still endeavoured to bring about a mediation, and instructed his resident at the French court, Von Crockow, to find out from Louis what satisfaction he would accept from the States-General, pledging himself to obtain it. Lionne cut short all negotiation, declaring that the King could accept nothing from those whose power he intended to destroy, and he added that the conventions concluded between the King and his allies would allow of no further agreement.

The Elector, thus rebuffed, did not hesitate as to the line of policy he should pursue, notwithstanding the threatening representations made by the new minister sent by the King of France to Berlin—Bernard de la Guiche, Comte de Saint Gérard. Frederick William paid no heed to them and remained inflexible in his resolve, although his chief advisers, especially his Prime Minister Baron Schwerin and the newly-married Electress, Dorothea of Holstein, spared no pains to turn him from it. Encouraged by Count Dohna, nephew of

the Princess-Dowager of Orange, and by Baron Pelnitz, his chief equerry and colonel of the guards—'as intelligent a man as I have ever known,' writes De Guiche, 'and wonderfully understanding in business'—Frederick William continued unflinching in his purpose. Public opinion, too, was in favour of a closer connection with the United Provinces. 'His generals, Otto Spaar and Eller,' writes Amerongen, 'were not content merely to drink to the health of the States and the success of their arms, but expressed also a desire to offer to the republic their services and those of their soldiers.' Not only did the Elector refuse to conclude a treaty of co-operation or even of neutrality with Louis XIV., but he sent him word, after first informing the envoy of the republic of his intentions, 'that he might be obliged to give to the United Provinces, if they were attacked, the assistance which he had formerly promised them by the treaty of Cleves through the mediation of the King of France, who could not, therefore, have any ground of complaint.'

The indecision of the States had hitherto prolonged the negotiations. They had confined themselves to making such advances to the Elector as consisted in accepting the sponsorship of one of his sons, to whom they gave handsome presents and a pension of 2,000 florins, and in showing willingness even to restore Orsoy to him. They refused, however, to give up to him the other fortresses which they held in the duchy of Cleves, and haggled over the subsidies to be granted to him, so as to cause the taunt to be addressed to them of 'acting as if it were a question of buying a dish of fish.' Amerongen extricated himself from these difficulties with singular skill, and Romswinkel, the Elector's envoy at the Hague, assisted him in smoothing them away by mutual concessions. The Elector was satisfied with a stipulation that his alliance with the republic should remain secret, concealed under the appearance of a promise of neutrality. By the terms of the treaty concluded at Cologne, the 2nd of May, 1672, he promised to furnish to the States-General 20,000 men and a force of artillery, of which he was himself to take the command, and to encamp them in Westphalia.

The States-General undertook on their side to pay half the expenses of the levy and pay of this corps d'armée, at a rate of 79,543 rix-dollars per month, and a first sum of 22,000 dollars was paid to the Elector at Hamburg on May 17.

Having thus pledged himself to assist the United Provinces, Frederick William completed his good offices by endeavouring to bring other princes into the alliance. His envoys in all the courts of Europe were instructed to watch and foil the manoeuvres of the French diplomatists. The Dutch resident at Vienna, Hamel Bruyninx, writes: 'All eyes are fixed upon the Elector. His conduct is considered decisive, as much on his own account and the power he possesses, as from his position in the Empire. It is thought that he above all people should guard the safety of Germany.' Amerongen, with good reason, congratulated himself on the assistance which he succeeded in procuring for the republic when abandoned or betrayed by her allies, and at the same time lamented that so useful an auxiliary had not sooner been summoned to her aid. '*Sero sapiunt Phryges,*' wisdom comes late to the Trojans, he writes to his friends, and he adds with pious gratitude, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

The negotiations of the States-General with the Elector of Brandenburg had encouraged the good-will towards them of the Archbishop of Mayence, and gradually drew him away from Louis XIV., who had not been well served at his court by the French resident, the Abbé Gravel. John Philip of Schoenborn, Archbishop of Mayence, in his capacity as Chief Elector, had the management of federal affairs, and was Arch-chancellor of the Empire. He had long been in constant communication with the other German princes, in order to conclude with them a defensive league, to which he had already gained the Electors of Trèves and Saxony, thus endeavouring to dispel the danger of French domination which was threatening Germany. With this object he gave his patronage to the political schemes initiated by the great philosopher of the seventeenth century, Leibnitz, whose lofty vein of speculative thought had not made him indifferent to the events of his time.

In the hope of averting the disaster of European war, rendered imminent through the ambition of Louis XIV., by offering an equivalent that might tempt him, Leibnitz proposed to him the conquest of Egypt, which would secure his supremacy in the Mediterranean. The most persuasive arguments had been skilfully brought together in the memoir which he submitted to the King. To stimulate his hostility to the United Provinces it was represented to him that the conquest of Egypt, which was called the Holland of the East, would weaken the power of the republic by depriving her of her commerce, her navigation, and her colonial supremacy. Leibnitz pointed out in eloquent language the grandeur of an enterprise which had tempted all conquerors, which Philip Augustus had planned, and Saint Louis had vainly attempted to execute. 'It would,' he wrote, 'win for the King of France not merely immortal glory and a conscience at ease, but also a certain victory of which he could take advantage to obtain recognition of his pre-eminence in Europe and to become the arbiter of all nations.'

The chief adviser of the Elector of Brandenburg, Baron Christian von Boineburg, one of the most eminent of German statesmen, undertook to prepare the way for an enterprise which seemed calculated to attract a great monarch. It was less chimerical than might be supposed, for we may remember that, 126 years later, the scheme was taken up by Bonaparte, who flattered himself that he should find in Egypt the key to the empire of the world. But absorbed in his preparations for the invasion of the United Provinces, Louis showed no disposition to entertain the proposal, and the Elector of Mayence was obliged sorrowfully to renounce the hope of persuading him to accept it. Thenceforth he turned his attention solely to inducing Germany to take the side of the republic, and prepared to assist her by diplomacy while the Elector of Brandenburg defended her by arms.

These two alliances, however tardy and inadequate, were very useful to the United Provinces. The Elector of Mayence, who enjoyed great influence at the court of Vienna, might be

able to detach the Emperor Leopold from the French alliance; and, in addition, the apparent disposition of the Elector of Brandenburg threatened Louis with a dangerous diversion which might cut off the communications of his army with France. Although he had failed in obtaining a military guarantee for the security of the United Provinces by the occupation he had vainly urged of the town of Cologne, the Grand Pensionary had at least turned to account all the resources of diplomacy in the defence of their cause.

He completed this work of prevision by securing to the States-General the alliance of Spain, thus closing the road of the Netherlands to Louis, and rendering the United Provinces inaccessible to a French invasion along the greatest portion of their frontier. By a singular contrast the enmity between the two countries, which seemed to have been made irreconcilable by an eighty years' war, was transformed into an undertaking of mutual aid, and this alliance was to be turned against France, who, after liberating the United Provinces from the Spanish yoke, in her turn threatened them with a French conquest.

The States-General had already entered into close relations with the court of Madrid to preserve the possession of the Netherlands to Spain. But the Spanish Government had taken small account of the intervention of the States-General in their behalf, and had not forgiven them for forcing Spain, by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, to give up to the King of France a portion of what he had conquered. Their persistent demands relative to the subsidies which they desired to obtain from Spain for the benefit of Sweden, as the price of her participation in the Triple Alliance, had added to the irritation of the counsellors of the Queen-Regent, and the court of France had flattered itself that it might obtain acceptance at Madrid of proposals for an exchange in the Low Countries. The Dutch envoys at Brussels, Vrybergen and Van der Tocht, had accordingly prolonged their residence there in vain, and had not succeeded in procuring the adoption of measures of defence for the protection of the Spanish provinces against a fresh attack.

Not discouraged, the States-General, inspired by the active zeal of the Grand Pensionary, looked round for assistance to enable them to resume negotiations under more favourable conditions. Two statesmen, Count Monterey at Brussels and Beverningh at Madrid, contributed especially towards the desired result, and succeeded in rousing the Spanish Government from its lethargy.

Don Inigo Velasco, Count of Monterey and a grandee of Spain, who had been appointed Governor of the Netherlands in the room of the incapable and indolent Constable of Castille, was the second son of the former minister of Philip IV., Don Louis de Haro, who had negotiated the marriage of Louis XIV. with the Infanta of Spain. Although barely one-and-twenty, he had distinguished himself from his first entrance into office by his great abilities, which were enhanced by the charm of his manner, and he flattered himself that by his indomitable energy he might preserve to Spain that portion of her dominions which had not yet been conquered by France. Convinced that the fate of the Netherlands was involved in the independence of the United Provinces, he pointed out to the States-General the dangers of the King of France's aggression, urged them to provide for the security of the republic, and encouraged them to take measures for defence, himself setting the example of military preparations.

The States hastened to avail themselves at the court of Madrid of the good dispositions of the new governor. Their resident at Madrid, Baron Reede van Renswoude, who had owed his office to the solicitations of his father, deputy of the province of Utrecht, was just dead, without having been of any use to them as a diplomatist. 'His letters were not worth the carriage,' writes a contemporary. The States of Holland were anxious to replace him by a minister who should be worthy of their confidence, and proposed to the States-General the appointment of Beverningh. 'The post of ambassador to Spain being vacant,' writes De Witt to him in February 1670, 'the States must choose the most eminent person to fill it. Their Noble Mightinesses have therefore instructed me to request you to

be so good as to return to the service of your country by accepting an embassy extraordinary to that court, thus aiding by your vigilant care to maintain the peace which you signed at Aix-la-Chapelle, and to facilitate both the alliances and the other measures necessary for its continuance.'

Beverningh was not at all desirous to leave home, and preferred to remain in the Assembly of the States of Holland as deputy of the town of Gouda. De Witt, convinced that the success of the Spanish negotiations depended upon his acceptance of the embassy, had recourse to the most urgent representations to overcome his hesitation. Beverningh continued to repel these advances. Four months later, Temple writes, 'The States of Holland would fain engage Monsieur Beverningh to accept of that employment, but I doubt their succeeding.' The States of Holland, however, encouraged by the Grand Pensionary, would not be rebuffed. They offered Beverningh every possible assurance that might satisfy him. Not only did they grant him liberty to return, only asking him to take the embassy for a limited time, with the title of ambassador extraordinary, but they even forbore to associate a colleague with him: 'in consideration of his proved conduct, his vigilance, and his indefatigable labours.' They undertook besides to supplement his salary at the cost of the province, raising it to a hundred gold caroluses, or forty crowns a day. By these means they obtained his consent and hastened to propose his nomination to the States-General, who confirmed it without delay.

It was important that the negotiations should be commenced at Brussels so as to insure to the republic the support and assistance of Count Monterey. The States-General, accordingly, before despatching Beverningh to Spain, sent him to visit the Governor of the Netherlands. At the first interview he won the Spaniard's confidence. Count Monterey informed him of the military and financial resources at his disposal, not concealing their insufficiency, and begged him to support the constant appeals for money which he was making to the Spanish Government. He promised also, in order to insure the success of the embassy confided to him, to secure

for him the good-will of his uncle, Don Pascal of Aragon, Archbishop of Toledo, and of his father-in-law, Count Ayola, who were both among the Queen-Regent's advisers.

On his return to the Hague, Beverningh reported the result of his conferences with Count Monterey, and received instructions from the States-General as to the course of his diplomacy. These were drawn up in fifty articles regulating the various parts of the negotiations. Beverningh was desired to recommend to the court of Madrid the interests of Dutch commerce, and to obtain its co-operation in the war of tariffs declared by the United Provinces against France in reprisal of the duties and prohibitions imposed upon their goods and merchandise. The measures to be taken for the security of the Netherlands, on which the States-General felt that their own safety depended, were to be the principal object of his embassy. Beverningh was, therefore, to represent to the Spanish Government the necessity of securing, in case of attack, the assistance of Sweden, by the payment of the subsidies remaining due to her, and by the guarantee of those promised for putting into the field the forces that she was to furnish. He was instructed, besides, to persuade Spain to enter into pecuniary engagements with the Princes of Brunswick, and to oblige the Emperor to pledge himself, at least, to neutrality. Thus, while appearing to think only of securing the safety of the Netherlands in the interest of Spain, the States-General were calculating upon making use of the Spanish Government either to pay the defenders whom they themselves might need, or to guarantee the preservation of peace. With this object they impressed upon their agent that he should 'keep up communications with the other foreign ambassadors, particularly those of England and Sweden, and even with the nuncio, to whom he was to pay the same civilities as were observed by the other ministers.' The negotiations of Beverningh were destined to acquire decisive importance, and the scope of his instructions was to be still further extended, by the necessity of gaining the assistance of Spain for the United Provinces to preserve them from the dangers to which they were about to be exposed.

Quitting the Hague on December 6, 1670, the Dutch ambassador landed in Spain six weeks later, and was prevented by ill-health from making his public entry into Madrid on horseback. Hardly had he arrived before he found himself involved in the difficulties opposed by the indecision of the Spanish Government to the success of his diplomatic mission. These had been foreseen with remarkable clearness by Lionne, who writes to Pomponne: 'The negotiations of Beverningh will be rendered difficult by the lively apprehension that the Spanish ministers will feel that as soon as the King, their master, makes up his mind to assist the Dutch, his Majesty will turn against Flanders all that he has prepared for the United Provinces. Still they reflect that by leaving the latter to be destroyed they gain only the favour granted by the Cyclops of being devoured last, so that they are placed in a singular embarrassment, whichever resolution they take.'

Two parties, of which the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo and Count Peñaranda were the chiefs, were disputing for power. On the one hand, the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo had assumed the government in the name of the Queen-Regent, Maria Anne of Austria, and in the event of a vacancy on the throne he wished that the inheritance of the monarchy should pass to the German Emperor. On the other, Count Peñaranda, attached to Don Juan, the natural son of Philip IV., was determined to defend the throne of Spain against all foreign pretenders. Notwithstanding this divergence of opinion, both were in favour of the preservation of the Netherlands. But the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, from enmity and jealousy towards the new governor, Count Monterey, was not disposed to listen to his warlike proposals, and preferred to avert the danger by conciliatory measures which he advised should be used towards the King of France. Count Peñaranda, on the contrary, was disposed to repulse the offers made by Louis XIV. of a compromise that should effect a peaceful settlement of the disputes relating to the new frontiers of France and the Netherlands, and would have preferred the renewal of a war which would force the United Provinces to take part openly for Spain.

The States-General were in equal dread of both these dangers, and took all means to evade them. They could not conceal from themselves that peace would be again endangered if the court of Madrid rejected the proposal of Louis to submit the disputes arising from the different interpretations of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle to the arbitration of England and Sweden. The Spanish Government declared that it could not accept this mediation, since the King of France desired to exclude the States-General from it. In vain did the States represent that when the United Provinces had themselves drawn back, Spain could not insist upon their participation. 'So far as we are concerned,' writes De Witt to the Spanish ambassador at the Hague, Don Estevan de Gamarra, 'although we greatly esteem the honour done by the Queen-Regent to the States, we are yet of opinion that it is important to us, and still more so to her Majesty, that this consideration should be disregarded; and that attention should be paid only to finishing the business as soon as possible, and to settling without loss of time the disputes which have not yet been adjusted, so as to avert all danger of a fresh rupture. In the present condition of affairs it is better to look to essentials, than to trifle about a supposed point of honour while interest summons us elsewhere.'

The court of Madrid still, however, sought fresh devices to elude the arbitration, and the Grand Pensionary spared neither remonstrances nor even threats to put an end to delays as useless as they were dangerous. 'It is for her Majesty's ministers,' he writes, 'to decide whether, by continuing in obstinate opposition to their own interests, they intend to precipitate both her and themselves, at their own risk and peril, into inevitable misfortunes.' Beverningh warmly pressed these expostulations, but could not obtain attention to them. His memorials remained unanswered. 'We seldom meet,' he writes, 'and the interviews are confined to the reading of a few interrupted sentences of which it is impossible to discover the sense or the connection.' However, when the court of Madrid was convinced that nothing was to be expected from England, whose understanding with France

was becoming more and more evident, it recognised its powerlessness, and, making up its mind to submission, at length consented to the arbitration.

It was easier to compel Spain to adopt even a policy of concession than one of resistance, and it was necessary almost to use force to oblige her to defend the Netherlands against a new invasion. The court of Madrid was not disposed to pay the costs of another war, and proposed to leave them to the States-General, representing that the United Provinces were now in greater danger than the Netherlands of French conquest. In vain Beverningh reproached the advisers of the Queen Regent with forgetting that if the Spaniards allowed the territory of the United Provinces to be encroached upon they would find themselves henceforward between the hammer and the anvil. Hampered by his ignorance of the Spanish language, with which he was unfortunately not acquainted, as he writes to De Witt, and obliged almost always to ask leave to transact his business in writing, he was annoyed at the impossibility of putting an end to the tergiversations with which his demands for troops and money were met, and he writes to the Constable of Castille, 'that by persisting in maintaining silence the Spanish Government would compel him to take his leave.' His urgency, helped by the good offices of the imperial ministers, did, however, obtain the satisfaction he demanded. On the same day on which the Queen Regent informed him that she consented to the final settlement of her differences with the King of France by the acceptance of the arbitration, she also told him that the president of the council of finance had received orders to continue the payments demanded by Sweden, and she assured him 'that for the defence of the Netherlands the Spanish Government would go beyond the possible, as much in its own interest as for the satisfaction of the United Provinces.'

The States-General were so fearful of giving the slightest pretext for aggression, that, instead of asking for an alliance, they contented themselves with an engagement of mutual assistance, no one being disposed to go farther. That it

might be the more easily concluded, the Grand Pensionary proposed that Count Monterey should be commissioned, in his capacity as Governor of the Low Countries, to consult with the commissioners of the States-General, and he demanded that the negotiations should in future be carried on at Brussels. This proposal once accepted by the Spanish Government, Beverningh was entitled to consider himself relieved from a mission which he had successfully fulfilled, and on which he received through De Witt the most flattering congratulations. Impatient to return home, he had already obtained permission to quit Madrid as soon as the Spanish Government should have accorded him a favourable reply. A month after he had received it, he obtained his farewell audience, at which he recommended the interests of the States-General to the care of the Queen Regent, and, making over his powers to the Secretary Valkenier, embarked for Holland, having secured the success of the negotiations which had been confided to him.

Nothing now remained but to complete the work of his embassy. The conferences which had been transferred to Brussels and the Hague followed their regular course under the direction of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, who was able to smoothe away the only remaining difficulties with regard to the carrying out of the engagement of mutual assistance. No reservation had been made by the commissioners charged with the task of drawing up the articles and submitting them to the States, but when they read out their report the deputies of Utrecht refused to guarantee the integrity of the Spanish monarchy in the event of a war between France and Spain, and would only engage to secure to Spain her possessions in the Netherlands. They yielded at last, however, to the urgent representations of the States of Holland, as expressed by the Grand Pensionary, and the scheme of agreement was confirmed by the votes of the deputies of all the provinces.

The Spanish negotiators delayed it for two months longer. The new ambassador from the court of Madrid, Don Emanuel de Lyra, did not show the same conciliatory disposition as his

predecessor, Don Estevan de Gamarra, who had just died. After vain attempts at procrastination and paltry quarrels about diplomatic etiquette, he announced that Spain would only consent to offer the United Provinces, in the event of an invasion, an auxiliary body of troops, and would refuse to bind herself by any engagement which would prevent her making a separate peace with France.

In order not to delay the conclusion of the treaty the States-General yielded this last clause, but they vehemently demanded the fulfilment of the promise given by Spain to assist them with her entire army, even if only as an auxiliary, that is to say without breaking with France. The friendly disposition of one of the negotiators, the Marquis de Louvignies, Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish forces in the Netherlands, with whom De Witt was on the best terms, was of great assistance to them in arranging this compromise. On December 17, 1671, the Commissioners of the States-General and the Spanish ambassador exchanged in their masters' names the declaration of mutual assistance, which was to be ratified within a period of two months.

Louis XIV. had neglected neither cajoleries nor threats in order to obstruct these negotiations. He had allowed them to be entered upon in the hope that they would furnish him with a pretext for breaking the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and thus enable him to complete the conquest of the Netherlands. But as soon as he perceived that any attack upon the Spanish possessions would cause a revival of the Triple Alliance, sooner than brave a fresh coalition, he renounced all thoughts of aggression against Spain. His mind being now filled solely with ideas of a war with the republic, he left no stone unturned to deprive the United Provinces of the alliance which was of so much importance to them. In order to deter the Spanish Government from entering into it, he gave instructions to his ambassador at Madrid, M. de Bonsy, Archbishop of Toulouse, to make known that he had received offers from the States-General with reference to the Netherlands, and to announce that he would willingly engage to accept no proposal concerning a partition, at least till the

young King of Spain should have attained his majority. As Louvois wrote later to Condé, he knew quite well, 'that he could always find an excuse for drawing back.' The communication transmitted to the Queen Regent by the French ambassador was received with such marks of satisfaction, that M. de Bonsy flattered himself that he had persuaded the Spanish Government to renounce all idea of an agreement with the States-General. Having allowed himself to be thus deceived, he requested to be allowed to return to his diocese, and was shortly afterwards replaced by the Marquis de Villars.

Louis XIV., having been informed of the conferences held at Brussels, did not await the arrival of his new ambassador in Madrid to oppose the measures of Count Monterey, who wished to close the Netherlands as well as the United Provinces to French commerce. The King of France hoped, moreover, to prevent the Spanish Government from treating with the States-General by causing his representations to be supported by those of the King of England, who sent the Earl of Sunderland as ambassador extraordinary to Spain. He instructed the Marquis de Villars to join with the latter in demanding from the court of Madrid an offensive alliance against the United Provinces, authorising him, however, in case the alliance could not be obtained, to content himself with a promise of neutrality. He added to these diplomatic measures a letter addressed directly to the Queen Regent of Spain, assuring her of his friendly dispositions, 'for which he referred her to his ambassador.' His advances were, however, useless, a resolution having been come to unknown to him, which was now irrevocable; on the very day that the Marquis de Villars was making known his instructions to the widow of Philip IV. the engagement of mutual assistance between the States-General and Spain had been signed at the Hague.

The penetration of the French diplomatists had thus been baffled. Persuaded that the conquest by France of the Netherlands would speedily follow that of the United Provinces, the Queen Regent preferred to expose herself to the possible risk of losing them, by boldly taking the part of the republic, rather than to make their loss at a later period

inevitable, by a policy of abstention. 'I find amongst the ministers great favour towards the States, and hatred towards France,' writes the Dutch commissioner, Mels, from Madrid; 'a member of the council of war boasted to me that he stood up before the council and declared that he would hold as traitors to the King all who were not prepared to assist our provinces, and to enter into a close alliance with them.'

Wishing, however, to exhaust all measures of conciliation before ratifying the treaty which had just been concluded, the Spanish Government made one last attempt at pacification, by offering its mediation to the French and English ambassadors. They responded only by threats of a speedy declaration of war, 'by means of which they hoped to complete the alarm of the Spanish Government.' These hopes were disappointed. The Queen Regent, driven to extremities, declared proudly that she would not persist in making any fresh proposals, but would do all that the treaties permitted her under the circumstances. The ratification of the engagement of mutual assistance which had been signed at Brussels after having been fruitlessly delayed by the French ambassador, was sent to Count Monterey and transmitted by him to the States, who received it with equal joy and gratitude. 'There is much uneasiness felt in Paris at the declaration of Spain,' writes De Groot, 'and the successful issue of the war is looked upon as less certain.'

In order to strengthen the alliance between the two governments, Count Monterey hastened to make known to the States-General that his latest instructions permitted him to complete the treaty and to consent to the prohibition of any separate peace in the event of a rupture with France. This new engagement, which was exchanged at the Hague, February 22, 1672, by the Grand Pensionary of Holland and the Spanish ambassador, in person, drew still closer the alliance between the two governments. 'This is a work of your hand,' writes De Witt to the Marquis de Louvignies, 'which is so much to your honour, and at the same time so conducive to a general peace, that we must all give you credit for it.'

Nothing remained to be done but to fix the contingent of troops destined for mutual defence. This convention was

negotiated between Count Monterey and the commissioners who had been sent to Brussels a month before by the States-General: Cornelius de Witt, Vrybergen—deputy of Zealand in the Council of State—and the Rhingrave. Count Monterey promised that he would shortly be in a position to put into the field a body of infantry of about ten thousand men, but could only engage for the moment to send three thousand horse. At his urgent request the commissioners determined to place at his disposal, in the neighbourhood of Bergen-op-Zoom, an auxiliary force of five regiments, under the command of Frederick of Nassau, Lord of Zuylestein, to whom they gave orders to enter the Netherlands at the first signal given by the Spanish Government. 'The despatch of these reinforcements to the forts near our frontiers,' writes De Witt to his brother, 'should give grounds for the hope that the dispositions of the Queen Regent will be rendered still more favourable.'

To encourage her in her friendly feelings, the States-General determined to send a new ambassador to represent them at Madrid. Beveren, councillor of Dordrecht, to whom the appointment was offered, not having accepted it, they made choice of Adrian Paats, councillor of Rotterdam, a devoted friend of the Grand Pensionary and a learned lawyer and skilful diplomatist, who was to complete later on the negotiations so happily commenced by Beverningh. The States wished to obtain through him the promise that Spain would break with France in the event of an invasion of the United Provinces, offering in return to make an engagement to the same effect if the Netherlands should be attacked. They hoped in this manner to turn aside the attacks which might be made upon them, being persuaded that when once Louis XIV. was no longer under any necessity of keeping on terms with Spain, he would not be able to resist the temptation of carrying the war into Flanders and Brabant. 'In that case,' writes De Witt to his brother, 'unless there should be a flagrant violation of the Triple Alliance, England and Sweden will not be able to refrain from assisting Spain, and in assisting her, from assisting us also.' The Spanish court refused for the present to give them this satisfaction,

not choosing to bring about the inevitable and immediate invasion of the Netherlands, while the hope still remained of protecting the Spanish possessions by merely opposing the conquest of the United Provinces.

But although Spain would not consent to a declaration of war against France, her engagement to assist the States-General was sufficient to put an end to the dangers of their diplomatic isolation. 'I am persuaded,' writes De Groot from Paris, 'that the Spanish court will draw many princes into this league who had hitherto only looked upon our State as divided in itself, and destitute of any ally.' Moreover the intervention of Spain opposed a barrier to French invasion which closed the entrance into their territory along a line extending sixty leagues. So long as they were unapproachable on the side of the Netherlands they might still escape from the conquest with which they were threatened, and they possessed now in the Spanish alliance the surest guarantee of their safety.

It was not alliances, however, nor the more or less tardy assistance which the republic hoped for from abroad, that could suffice for her security. In order to maintain their independence, the United Provinces must defend themselves. Neither their wealth, which aroused the envy of all other nations, nor their commerce, to which Europe paid tribute, nor their fleets, which secured to them the supremacy over the ocean, could shelter them from invasion. They had not troops to repel it, and far from being alarmed at their destitute condition, the States of Holland, ever since the attempt made on their authority by the last stadtholder, had rather sought for their security in the weakening of their military forces, which they considered as dangerous to political freedom. The old army of the War of Independence, made illustrious by so many battles and sieges, and which for the last twenty-five years had had no enemy to fight against, had become speedily disorganised. The imprudent confidence which the States-General reposed in the treaty of the Triple Alliance had made them indifferent to the maintenance of their military forces.

The Grand Pensionary of Holland himself shared this delusive security, which was to cost him his life. He would have been unable, moreover, to arrest the course of public opinion, which demanded the disbandment of a portion of the troops, whose maintenance imposed too heavy a burden on the States-General. He expressed himself candidly to that effect in a letter addressed to De Groot when ambassador in Sweden. 'The attainment of peace,' he writes, 'has cost the republic millions, causing lamentations to be heard perpetually from her subjects about the payment of taxes. It is easy, therefore, to understand that the deliberations of the States must necessarily turn upon a reduction of the army, so that there may be fewer expenses to meet, and they may thus place themselves in such a position as may enable them later on to assist their allies, if a new war should supervene.' Persuaded that they had nothing to fear on their own account, the inhabitants of the United Provinces were impatient to enjoy the blessings of peace, and yielded to that pacific inclination which, in governments that promote free discussion, almost always follows upon the lassitude caused by prolonged efforts and great sacrifices.

Of the seven provinces, Holland had contributed in the largest measure by her taxes and loans towards the expenses of the last war with England, as well as towards the preparations made for the protection of the Netherlands. She had taken upon herself an augmentation of 15,000,000 florins in the public debt, without counting the money advanced to the other provinces, which amounted to more than 325,000 florins. It was, therefore, more important to her than to any other province to make provision for the prompt payment of interest as well as for the reduction of taxation. As soon, therefore, as the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had been concluded, the States of Holland had proposed a considerable diminution of the army, which they wished to replace on a peace footing. In compliance with their request, the Council of State obtained a vote from the States-General for the discharge of 37,000 foot and 4,600 horse. This disbandment, which affected more than half the army, insured to the United Provinces a

saving of 1,607,086 florins per annum, of which by far the larger share was for the benefit of Holland.

These measures had not been carried out without giving rise to disputes between the States of Holland and the States-General, which threatened to break the bonds of the confederation. The difference arose with regard to the disbandment of the companies of French troops that had continued in the employment of the republic since the War of Independence. These companies were only to be disbanded according as vacancies occurred amongst their captains. The States of Holland, having bought out the officers commanding them, were not satisfied with the immediate dismissal of those companies which were still in their pay, pleading in justification the example already set by the other provinces, but claimed the right of themselves determining the number of companies they should disband, without being obliged to abide by the distribution fixed by the Council of State and adopted by the States-General. Instead of sixteen companies of the old troops which they had a right to discharge, they caused the reduction to be extended to twenty-seven, and even designated the eleven companies of recruits that should be comprised in this supplementary disbandment. They maintained, with good reason, that by charging them with the maintenance of a second regiment of marine infantry, in which the companies consisted of a hundred men, while those of the other regiments did not exceed sixty-five men, the States-General had increased their contingent by an excess of men whom they were at liberty to dismiss by way of compensation, by reducing proportionately the number of companies which they maintained. But in thus acting for themselves, they were guilty none the less of a usurpation of authority.

The States-General, on their side, instead of employing a conciliatory policy, threw themselves into the quarrel with ill-advised precipitation. In compliance with the demand of the Council of State, they decided that orders for disbanding troops could not be given by the states of the provinces, and authorised the Council of State to prohibit the governors of fortified towns, and colonels, from allowing the measures taken

by the States of Holland to be carried into execution. This resolution was carried by surprise in the presence of a single deputy of Holland, who inadvertently allowed it to pass. The states of the province immediately assembled and repaired in a body to the assembly of the States-General, where the Grand Pensionary acted as their spokesman. They represented that they were fulfilling their federal obligations so long as they maintained the contingent of troops with which they were chargeable, and they brought forward proofs that the force they had in their pay exceeded the contingent imposed upon them. They claimed, moreover, for the provinces the privilege of having the sole right of carrying into execution, with regard to the troops paid by each of them, the resolutions come to by the assembly of the States-General, and they demanded, therefore, that the manifesto revoking their orders should not be issued. The Council of State claimed the right to be heard, in order to dispute their pretensions; but the States-General, having admitted that the contingent of the States of Holland could not be augmented, did not choose to prolong a useless quarrel about privileges, and the satisfaction thus accorded them re-established harmony.

By persisting in the dispute, the States of Holland would have been without excuse but for their dread of the intervention of the States-General in the military affairs of the confederation. They could not forget the dangers which the latter had brought upon their provincial independence by supporting to their detriment the coup d'état attempted by the last stadtholder, and, determined for the future to be on their guard, took measures of precaution at the risk of exaggerating them. The dispute they had stirred up was of no importance so far as the military forces were concerned; it only affected eleven companies, and could have no other result than an increase or reduction of seven or eight hundred men in the army. Still it was not with impunity that the States of Holland were setting the example of opposition offered by a single province to resolutions agreed to in common for fixing the military contingent, and they were thus encouraging that resistance

which was subsequently opposed to themselves, when making vain attempts to place the republic in a state of defence.

The reduction of the army, which gave rise to no dispute amongst the provinces, was in conformity with the practice constantly observed up to that time. After the peace of Münster, only 29,000 men had been kept under arms, instead of 120,000. The steps which had just been taken reduced the force from 74,000—which number it had recently reached—to 32,640: 2,705 horse and 29,935 foot; for the maintenance of which an annual sum of 3,059,500 florins was set aside.

This army, of which the States were speedily to perceive the insufficiency, was divided into twenty-nine regiments of infantry and ten of cavalry, of which fourteen regiments of infantry and five of cavalry were kept up by Holland. The infantry regiments were subdivided into 404 companies of infantry and fifty companies of cavalry, half of which were in the pay of Holland. The infantry regiments, consisting of 1,000 or 1,100¹ men, comprised thirteen to fifteen companies. These companies, instead of being kept up to a complement of 100 men, to which they were restored later on, only consisted now of about sixty-five. The cavalry regiments consisted usually of only five companies, each numbering fifty horse at the outside. The infantry were armed with pikes and matchlocks; each company consisted of about thirty-six musketeers and twenty-five pikemen. Those of the cavalry who wore the cuirass were armed with swords, and the rest with arquebuses. The cuirassiers and arquebusiers usually formed distinct companies; when they were joined in one company, the arquebusiers were always the more numerous.

The officers of an infantry regiment consisted of: a colonel, who received 200 florins a month, to which was added his pay as captain of the colonel's company; ² a lieutenant-colonel, who

¹ This number was doubled in the regiments of marine infantry.

² The companies placed under the direct command of the colonel, and which were therefore designated colonels' companies, contained a superior number of men.

received 80 florins; a sergeant-major with 60 florins, a quartermaster with 25 florins, a provost-marshal with 20 florins, and a chaplain with 50 florins. Each infantry company had: a captain in receipt of 100 florins a month, a lieutenant, a standard-bearer or ensign, a sergeant, a corporal, a drummer, and a surgeon. The men's pay was 16 florins a month for each pikeman, and 14 for each musketeer. Each company of horse was commanded by a captain, who had at his disposal three servants and four horses, and who received 250 florins a month; he had under him a lieutenant, a cornet, a quartermaster, a trumpeter and a farrier. Each officer received, besides his pay, 25 florins for the keep of his horses; the pay of the men was 28 florins.

Although military service was nominally imposed upon every man from the age of eighteen to sixty, this law had gradually fallen into disuse. The army was recruited, according to the custom of the day, by means of levies, carried out at the expense of the colonels and captains whom the States-General or the States of each province appointed in advance to the nominal command of their regiments or companies. They repaid themselves out of the price paid them by the States for each man,¹ and received in addition a premium,² as soon as the troops were available. Although the States of the provinces had reserved to themselves the right of nomination to all the commands of companies, the colonels appointed the captains, and at each fresh creation of companies the captains appointed the lieutenants, subject to certain conditions of military capacity. The commanders of regiments and companies did not fail to profit by the privileges which were thus allowed them, in spite of the prohibition to accept any sum of money from the officers whom they selected. As regarded the pay, it was made over to the captains of companies, and although it was settled at an unvarying amount, this handling of money, which the States of Holland would gladly have put a stop to, was the source of gain that was prejudicial to the

¹ The amount paid for the levy of troops varied. In 1662, twelve florins were paid for a foot-soldier and sixty for a horseman, besides travelling expenses.

² Forty florins for a company of infantry and seventy for a company of cavalry.

public interests. According to the evidence of De Guiche, who is perhaps not quite to be trusted, 'a Dutch cavalry company was worth a certain income of 5,000 florins.' The commands were considered as a sort of endowment, from which a revenue was to be drawn.

Thus abuses of all sorts were multiplied, without a possibility of their being repressed. De Guiche has given an account of them which betrays some exaggeration, but is none the less instructive. Being at Bergen-op-Zoom, he writes in his memoirs, he learned from the quartermaster of two companies of cavalry quartered there, that although they were changing garrison the quartermaster still retained a public-house which he kept in that town, in consideration of a sum of 200 or 300 florins which he paid the captain to be allowed to remain at home. De Guiche was assured that most of the cavalry soldiers were equally exempt from moving on payment of twelve or fifteen pistoles a month. 'I was much astonished,' he adds, 'to hear of a body of cavalry composed of men who never left their houses; and wishing to know whether this custom was followed elsewhere, I was informed that it was everywhere the same, only that the captain was bound to share with the other officers.'

The injudicious selection of the superior officers was the cause of this dangerous negligence. Suspected on account of their attachment to the Orange party, dissatisfied with a thankless service which gave them little chance of promotion, especially now that all vacancies were promised to the captains and lieutenants placed on half-pay in consequence of the reduction of the forces, the old officers had for the most part given in their resignation. They were generally replaced by youths hardly out of boyhood, the sons of citizens who owed their appointments to their connection with members of the States and who had had no apprenticeship in military matters. Some, sure of impunity, kept their companies below the proper complement, in order to increase their profits; others, without any regard to their duties, obtained substitutes, or left the command to their subalterns. The ties of discipline had thus become relaxed. Count de Guiche relates in his memoirs, that,

in the last war against the Bishop of Münster, an advanced guard of cavalry ordered out at eight o'clock in the evening, could only be got together at daybreak, and he adds that a colonel commissioned to defend the trenches and ordered by Prince John Maurice of Nassau to advance, kept him waiting more than two hours, because he had just received a letter from his wife and wished to answer it.

The distribution of military supplies was in no less disorganised a condition. The commissariat department was in arrears; Colonel Bampffield complains 'that the troops stationed on the banks of the Rhine at Rhyneberg were without supplies, without cheese or butter, and could not buy food for love or money.' As for ammunition, the States-General had allowed themselves to be robbed of it. The Marquis de Louvois had in fact conceived and executed the audacious plan of purchasing it, and the thirst for gain had caused this speculation to be successfully carried out before it was discovered. Under the superintendence of the chief purveyor to the French army, Berthelot, and through the intervention of a Jew banker of Amsterdam, named Sadoc, considerable stores of powder, saltpetre, lead and matches were forwarded, under specious pretexts, into the electorate of Cologne, for the service of the King of France. As soon as the suspicions of the States-General began to be aroused with regard to this strange trade, they prohibited the export of military stores; but these had already in part disappeared, and on the urgent representations of John de Witt, the States were reduced to buying up all that they could obtain in the Netherlands.

The fortifications were in an equally unsatisfactory state, having been for the most part abandoned. The bastions had been transformed into gardens, the ditches had become fordable for want of proper care, houses had risen up round the ramparts, and measures for defence had been more than once sacrificed to the convenience of the magistrates of the towns. Moreover the fortresses were too numerous to be kept up or repaired, and it would have been impossible to dismantle the smaller ones without giving rise to suspicions of treason; in fact such a step would have been in opposition to the customary

laws of tactics in the seventeenth century, which multiplied fortresses for the purpose of weakening by a number of sieges the forces of the attacking army. All means of defence were thus wanting to the republic, and she no longer reckoned as a military power. 'We appear to understand war no longer;' such was the melancholy confession of one of the Grand Pensionary's correspondents.

No measure of reorganisation could be taken, moreover, till the States had filled up the superior commands. The post of commander-in-chief had been vacant for thirteen years, since the death of Major-General Brederode; and Prince William Frederick of Nassau, Master-General of Ordnance, who had died four years before, had had no successor. The States-General, after long debates, recognised the necessity of once more giving chiefs to the army. Six months before the first proposals for disbanding the troops, they had made choice of two major-generals: Prince John Maurice of Nassau, and the Swedish general, Wurtz. To these appointments were added those of two lieutenant-generals of cavalry, the Rhynegrave, and the Prince of Tarentum. The command of the artillery was conferred on one of the nobles of Holland, Van der Does de Noordwijck, Governor of Sluys, and that of the infantry on Frederick of Nassau, Lord of Zuylestein, president of the nobility of Utrecht, and paternal uncle of the Prince of Orange. The senior colonels, De Harsolte, Welderen, Aylva, and Dé Hornes, also received appointments, the two former as commissaries-general of cavalry, and the others as *sergents-majors* of infantry.

Prince John Maurice of Nassau, who was now sixty-four years of age, and had occupied the posts of Captain-General of Brazil, Governor of Wesel, and lieutenant-general of cavalry, had grown old in the service of the republic, to which he was about to devote the remaining years of his life, while earning for himself fresh glory. The command of the army seemed to devolve naturally on him, but his character was too mild and conciliatory to allow him to exercise the authority necessary for enforcing obedience. Moreover, his near relationship to the Prince of Orange caused him to be

suspected by the republican party. In spite of the reserve he had shown towards the Orange party, and the assurances of good-will repeatedly given him by the Grand Pensionary, he had not succeeded in disarming the suspicions and distrust of the States of Holland.

His colleague, Paul Wurtz, Baron of Ornholm, a native of the Duchy of Schleswig, was a soldier of fortune, and had acquired his military renown while commanding successively the armies of the Kings of Sweden and Denmark; he had been recommended to the States-General as a distinguished soldier by their envoys in the north, Amerongen and Ysbrandt, and on taking service with them had stipulated that the chief command should be given to him in conjunction with Prince John Maurice of Nassau. The States of Holland, who had urged his appointment, intended, if it were carried out, to oppose him to the Orange party; but the army, in which the Prince of Orange possessed a great number of devoted partisans, could with difficulty be brought to obey a chief whose military discipline was too inflexible. The inevitable difficulties that Wurtz consequently had to encounter in the exercise of his functions, soon disheartened him, and he gave in his resignation, to which he held in spite of the remonstrance of the deputies sent to him by the States of Holland. The Grand Pensionary, while not concealing from himself the faults of his character, succeeded at length in inducing him to reconsider his decision, by guaranteeing to him concessions which satisfied his self-esteem.

The Rhyngrove, Frederick Magnus, Count Salm, Governor of Maestricht, had been appointed to succeed Prince John Maurice of Nassau as lieutenant-general of cavalry. In spite of his great age and infirmities, he was noted for his indomitable valour; but he was too much preoccupied in providing means of defence for the fortress confided to his care, to trouble himself much about the other duties of his office.

The States of Holland, who distrusted him on account of his loyalty to the Orange party, had stipulated that the States-General should associate with him in his command the Prince of Tarentum, Henry Charles de la Trémouille, who

had served with distinction in the army of the United Provinces during the War of Independence, and had been appointed colonel of a regiment of cavalry by the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, whose great-nephew he was through his wife. After the peace of Münster, irritated at not being able to obtain recognition of his title of Prince, which gave him eventual rights to the crown of France, he had joined the party of the Prince of Condé, and though he had since become reconciled to Mazarin, had returned to Holland in the hope of obtaining there some important military command. He had sought to gain this by distinguishing himself in the war with the Bishop of Münster, at the same time letting slip no opportunity of paying his court to the deputies of the province, as well as to the Grand Pensionary. Appointed Governor of Bois-le-Duc, he had claimed the post of major-general, and the States of Holland had hoped to satisfy him by conferring on him that of lieutenant-general of cavalry.

Displeased at having to share office with the Rhyngrove, the Prince of Tarentum made no secret of his annoyance, but made advances to the Prince of Orange, whose restoration appeared to him to be at hand, and to whom he hoped to marry his daughter. Two years later he resigned all his offices, which brought him in an income of more than ten thousand crowns. The pretext he adduced for this renunciation was his recent abjuration, although the States-General did not consider his conversion to the Catholic religion as incompatible with his command; but in reality he did not choose to expose himself to the chance of having to fight for the United Provinces against the King of France, whose rupture with the republic he foresaw. De Witt expressed his regrets to him in these terms: 'Having been informed of your Highness's intention of resigning your appointments, I cannot help feeling great regret at seeing the State deprived of the services of a person who has shown towards it so much affection in the past, and who might be so useful to it in the future.'

The staff of the army was thus composed of chiefs jealous of one another, and from whom the reorganisation of the

troops was not to be expected. One of the officers in whom De Witt had the greatest confidence, Colonel Bampffield, writes to him: 'I could wish that everyone who holds a command in your army were a Cæsar, a Hannibal, or a Gustavus Adolphus; but being such as they many of them are, three months in camp will be of great use to them to enable them to learn the most necessary things before they meet the enemy.'

The Grand Pensionary was undoubtedly concerned about this military weakness, which imperilled the independence of the United Provinces, but he could not believe that their existence was in danger. Accustomed to look upon politics as a science, he was convinced that the King of France would not sacrifice his interests to his passions, and he allowed himself to be reassured by De Groot, who wrote: 'When the King's ministers wish to intimidate me by the number of the French troops, I ask how they will feed them, as the expenses of a campaign cannot be less than 13,700,000 florins for four months.' De Witt, however, was speedily undeceived, and forced to repent of having advised a policy of disarmament. A year had not elapsed since the disbanding of a portion of the army, before he was requesting the States-General to replace it on a war footing. He was the first to raise the alarm, while it was yet time, but did not succeed in gaining a hearing. 'No one,' writes Pomponne to Louis XIV., 'had shown more pacific dispositions, and if I may believe well-informed persons, no one now displays greater energy in favour of action. This is, in fact, quite in accordance with his character, and the time which he takes for deliberation before coming to a decision, is followed by great firmness when that decision is come to.'

The first defensive measures that he recommended to the States-General, and for which he hoped to obtain the co-operation of the States of Holland, were, besides the equipment of eighty ships of war, an increase of forty men in each company of infantry, and the raising of fifty regiments, which would reinforce the army by 50,000 men. At the same time, De Witt urged the States of Holland to select officers to fill

up the vacancies in the new regiments, and to give the preference to foreign over native officers, in order to prevent appointments being made through family interest. He was leaving no stone unturned to procure for the States an army by the time it would be wanted. 'The reason for all this,' writes Temple to Arlington, 'is: *Qu'on ne les trouve pas sans verd le printemps qui vient.*'

In answer to the Grand Pensionary's appeal, the States-General commissioned the Council of State to submit to them proposals for extraordinary supplies destined to provide for levies and armaments. When the States of Holland became aware of this, fearing that they might be involved in expenses too onerous for them, they would only consent to increase the effective force of the infantry companies by raising them from sixty-five to eighty men. Not being required to reinforce the regiment of guards or the two regiments of marines which made a part of their provincial contingent, and the numerical force of which consisted of a hundred men, they agreed, by way of compensation, to raise some companies at their own expense. The States-General contented themselves with this increase of their military forces, which only gave them a reinforcement of about 5,000 men. The army contingent was raised for the year 1671, from 31,600 to 37,155 men—34,555 foot and 2,600 horse—at a cost of 9,018,861 florins.

'The Grand Pensionary told me, two days ago,' writes the French ambassador, 'that if his advice were followed, there would be more extensive preparations made, not that there was any idea of a war, but because it was prudent to place oneself in a position to carry it on, if it should take place. He added that if the State were attacked, it ought not to have less than 100,000 men, to occupy all the fortified towns on its frontiers, and to keep a body of troops in the field.' It was not out of bravado that De Witt expressed himself thus to the Marquis de Pomponne; his correspondence with the Dutch ambassadors in London and Paris places beyond a doubt his eager solicitude for measures of defence. 'I agree with you,' he writes to Van Beuningen, in England, 'that the increase of the army and fleet would not only conduce to the honour of the State

and insure to it important advantages, but might even prevent a fresh war. I shall use all the means in my power to set forth the utility and necessity for such a measure.' 'I have succeeded in raising fresh debates on the subject of armament,' he announces with satisfaction to De Groot, 'in order that we may be in a position to resist all attacks by the beginning of next year.'

Alarmed at the invasion of Lorraine, which Louis XIV. had recently surprised and taken possession of, the States of Holland could no longer conceal from themselves the necessity for making important preparations, though unable to make up their minds to all those that the Grand Pensionary wished to obtain. They demanded of the States-General that ten regiments of infantry and six of cavalry should be raised, making an effective force of 17,000 men; that the roll of each company should be increased to one hundred foot and eighty horse, up to 15,000 men, independently of the artillery and of an army train which they were prepared to furnish as part of their contingent. The deputies of their Boards of Admiralty voted in addition for the equipment of a fleet which should consist of forty-eight vessels and frigates, with twelve fire-ships. The States-General approved the proposals of the States of Holland, and commissioned the Council of State to draw up a scheme of extraordinary armament on land and sea, of which they would arrange the division amongst the provinces. 'We must not sleep,' writes De Witt to Colonel Bampfild, quoting from the classics this formidable menace: '*Annibal erit brevi ad portas.*'

The debates which followed delayed the passing of the vote. The provinces of Guelders, Overijssel, and Utrecht, who did not consider themselves concerned in maritime armaments, were not disposed to agree to them, while the States of Holland made them a condition of their consent to the levies of land forces. To reconcile these differences, the Council of State only asked for 1,500,000 florins for the fleet, with which Holland was satisfied, while 3,000,000 florins were to be devoted to the army. It proposed in addition a fresh distribution, according to which the expenses of the naval equipment should in future

only be borne by the maritime provinces, Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Groningen; while a larger proportion of the expenses of the army should be demanded from Guelders, Overijssel, and Utrecht. The States-General eagerly supported this arrangement, which was the more readily adopted that these three provinces gained by it a larger proportion of military appointments, which were thus placed at their disposal.

This agreement was nearly being destroyed by the unexpected opposition of Zealand, which was prolonged for two months by the intrigues of Odyk, the Prince of Orange's representative as senior noble in the Assembly of the States of the Province. Odyk had in the first instance shown himself favourable to military preparations, hoping thus to obtain for his brother, a captain of cavalry, the command of one of the regiments which were to be in the pay of Zealand. The new distribution proposed by the Council of State, imposing upon Zealand an increase of her naval contingent and relieving her of any augmentation in her contribution to the army, thus depriving that province for the future of the power of choosing new colonels, disappointed Odyk's expectations; and careless of all save his own personal interests, he persisted in refusing his consent, in spite of the favourable decision given by the principal towns of the province. The States of Holland complained vehemently of this conduct, and De Witt indignantly denounced 'the spirit of contradiction, which by an incredible fatality retarded a most important matter, to the great scandal of the friends of the country.' The steps taken to obtain the interference of the Prince of Orange removed this obstacle. The Princess Dowager having intervened and denounced Odyk to her grandson as a 'mischief-maker who might completely ruin his cause,' he was ordered to desist from his opposition, and at the beginning of the month of March 1671 the extraordinary war budget was at length carried.

The Council of State immediately repaired to the Assembly of the States-General, in order to compel all the provinces to provide, without further delay, the necessary financial means which De Groot urgently demanded. 'We must make our-

selves respected by the world, if we do not wish to be despised by it,' he writes to his habitual correspondent at the Hague, Wicquefort. 'He who plays the part of a sheep is eaten by the wolf: it is time that we put ourselves in a position to stand alone, as that is the only safety to be found in any policy.' This advice seemed the more justified that the arrival of the King of France in his new provinces of Flanders, where he had collected an army of 30,000 or 35,000 men, gave grounds for fearing an approaching invasion. A fleet of thirty ships, manned by 8,000 sailors and 2,800 marines, put to sea. Two divisions, each to consist of 14,000 foot and 3,000 horse, were destined, the one to guard the Yssel and the Rhine, the other for the protection of the Spanish Netherlands, in accordance with the plan of defence which the Grand Pensionary would have been glad to carry into execution without delay.

At the same time, to leave no opportunity for military rivalries, the Council of State settled the disputes respecting precedence amongst the cavalry officers of equal rank. Precedence was only allowed to general officers and colonels. It was only retained by the lieutenant-colonels and captains during a campaign, and was not to be given to those to be hereafter appointed. The infantry also obtained to a certain extent the satisfaction they demanded, and which it was hoped would contribute towards guaranteeing their good services.

These preparations for defence were still in part illusory. 'The matter of the levies,' wrote Pomponne some months before, 'was more or less warmly taken up according as the fears of the States with regard to France increased or diminished, and their fears were once more changed to confidence, when the King of France, after employing his troops in making earthworks, returned to Versailles.' The fleet was recalled into the harbours to remain there disarmed during the winter; the regiments were left in garrison; nothing was done but to collect the cavalry in detachments ready to take the field, and the levies which had been ordered were left incomplete.

It was not before the close of the year 1671 that the Council of State, becoming aware of the growing danger of the situation, and the imminence of a rupture, put forward

fresh proposals, urgently suggested by De Witt. The Grand Pensionary demanded a new naval armament which should consist of seventy-two ships, twenty-four frigates, and twenty-four fire-ships, at a cost of about seven millions. At the same time he represented the urgent necessity for a levy of 20,000 men, for which a sum of 2,027,531 florins should be added to the war budget in addition to a reserve fund of 3,000,000 with which it would be made up. These expenses were reduced by the States-General to forty-eight ships of war and twenty-five fire-ships, which were only to cost 4,776,000 florins, instead of 7,000,000, so as to reserve a surplus which would be employed for supplementary levies for the army. With this reservation, the proposals were adopted by the Federal Assembly, which returned them for deliberation to the States of the Provinces. The system of temporising which so greatly endangered the welfare of the republic was thus continued till the eve of the declaration of war.

The States of Holland had so far profited by these delays as to procure the funds required for paying the 16,000,000 florins voted for the military estimates, and of which they were to furnish the larger share; they were indebted for these resources to the vigilance of their First Minister, and to his financial genius. The necessary credit and money were not wanting, and they were bound to set an example of patriotism to the other provinces, which, with the exception of Zealand, whose finances were in a prosperous condition, had such difficulty in making both ends meet, that several of them had left their federal contingent in arrears, being unable to pay it.

To provide for the increase in military expenditure, the States of Holland had the choice between loans and taxation. The loans contracted during the last war with England had amounted to about seventeen millions of florins, and though the debt was still less by a million than it had been before its reduction, it had been raised to 5,580,956 florins, representing a capital of 125,000,000. Obligated to allow it to increase, as they had no fresh resources which they could devote to its redemption, they had been forced to content themselves with

the sinking fund which they had established in 1655 out of the proceeds of the savings made at that period by the reduction of the rate of interest, and of which the Grand Pensionary would not allow the destination to be changed. They were, moreover, averse from appealing again to the public by a fresh issue of stock, being honestly reluctant to entail upon the future the charges which they themselves were bound to provide for.

The Grand Pensionary would have preferred, therefore, the imposition of new taxes, in spite of the great number of those already laid on the taxpayers. He did not consider himself justified, except from the most imperative necessity, in augmenting the direct taxation, which was subdivided into a land tax and a tax on capital. The land tax was levied on income derived from land and houses; the tax on capital deducted sometimes a tenth and sometimes a fifth per cent. from all taxpayers whose property exceeded a thousand florins, and it was of so vexatious a nature that since the peace of Münster it had only been levied under exceptional circumstances, during the continuance of the two wars with England, in 1653 and 1666. Moreover, unless by readjustment, which would have provoked the most dangerous irritation, neither the land tax nor the tax on capital could be made productive, and the latter had never produced more than 600,000 florins.

Indirect taxation must, therefore, be had recourse to, but the opposition of the deputies of Amsterdam did not allow of its establishment. They refused to consent to any new tax so long as they had not obtained the suppression of the tax on freight (*last en veylgeldt*), which was a duty raised by the Boards of Admiralty on the import and export of merchandise. The Admiralty of Amsterdam was the only one rich enough to dispense with this tax, the others not being able to give it up without ruining themselves. The demands of the deputies of Amsterdam seemed, therefore, inadmissible, and the Grand Pensionary tried to induce them to desist from them by proposing a compromise: 'The preservation of harmony,' he writes, 'being in conformity with my temper and inclinations, as well as with the duties of my office.' He could not understand

how those who were alone in their opinion could pretend, contrary to all reason, to change the ideas of all the other members of the Assembly. 'If they will not allow themselves to be dissuaded,' he adds sadly, '*meo judicio actum erit de republica*, and it will only remain to me to throw upon the magistrates of Amsterdam the responsibility for the misfortunes which I foresee.' His persevering efforts were not without avail, and a month later he announced to Van Beuningen 'that the difficulties on account of which he had requested his conciliatory intervention being on the point of settlement, he was now in hopes of a speedy agreement.'

He hastened to take advantage of it in order to obtain the consent of the States to a tax on corn, which by doubling the mill and grinding duties would produce 350,000 florins a month. The low price at which wheat was sold, and the small amount of a tax which only cost the taxpayer a penny a week for wheaten bread and two farthings for rye bread, made this duty an easy one to raise. But the other provinces having refused to impose it, even for one year, the States of Holland felt themselves obliged to give it up, in order not to provoke the discontent of their subjects. They were no happier in an attempt at levying a tax on soap, and in vain tried to alter the duty on wine in order to render it more productive, by imposing it in the form of a direct tax on wholesale and retail houses. Difficulties in the way of collecting these new taxes prevented their being carried out.

The necessity for raising loans could no longer be evaded; it only remained to discover the mode which would impose the least burden on the public finances. A proposal for a loan of 1,500,000 florins on annuities was submitted to the States; the interest was to be capitalised at 4 per cent. for a period of forty-one years, leaving to the stockholders the right of withdrawing their capital after eighteen, twenty-five, or thirty-five years, as well as the power of investing it by companies of associates, with benefit to the survivor, in the same way that a tontine is instituted. Although such an operation was advantageous not only to the State, which it relieved of all payments for several years, but also to the lenders, who would

thus put by their income and deposit it in a sort of savings bank, it appeared too complicated to encourage subscriptions, and was unsuccessful.

A loan under the form of annuities seemed preferable. The Grand Pensionary made use of his mathematical and economical studies to realise it under the most advantageous conditions. He had studied in his leisure time the questions relating to it. He was no doubt unaware of the ingenious investigations of Pascal on the theory of the chances of human life, which, drawn up in 1654, were only published in 1679, under the title of 'Letters to De Fermat.'¹ He had, however, become familiar with the treatise composed by the famous Huyghens, who may have himself received assistance from Pascal. This treatise, entitled 'De Ratiociniis in Ludo Aleæ,' had been translated into Latin by the mathematical professor, Francis van Schoten, who had published some years before De Witt's work on curved lines. It rested on the fundamental proposition 'that the chances for or against any event may be represented by figures.' De Witt had determined to apply these laws of probability to the finances of Holland. With the assistance of John Hudde, former sheriff and councillor of Amsterdam, and curator of the Athenæum of that town, he caused statistics to be drawn up from the death registers, for the purpose of ascertaining the average length of life of fundholders receiving annuities from the States of Holland. His letters to Van Beuningen, and the correspondence that he carried on with his brother-in-law, Deutz, show the interest he took in these investigations.

He soon perceived the advantage of the system of life annuities; in fact, this sort of loan limited the national debt to the duration of one generation, to the advantage of the State, which was no longer forced to throw upon the future the charges of the present; and at the same time to the advantage of private individuals, who, by the contingent investment of their savings, could insure for themselves the gain of considerable interests. The traditions of family feeling which

¹ De Fermat, one of the greatest of French geometricians, was the correspondent of Descartes, Pascal, and Huyghens.

had been preserved intact in Holland, prevented any fear that capital—that is to say, the children's heritage—might thus be involved from a spirit of speculation. It was, on the contrary, in the interest of the children, and with a view to insure to them a patrimony, that the Grand Pensionary demanded the establishment of annuities; and when his proposal had been adopted by the States, guardians of orphan children were expressly authorised to avail themselves of this investment for the benefit of their wards.

In order to dispose the States towards the system of loan which he favoured, De Witt was anxious to prove to them that the interest paid at different times for the establishment of annuities, from $16\frac{1}{2}$ to $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., exceeded the limit of advantages to which these annuities ought to give a claim. By the help of learned calculations he demonstrated, that by reducing them to $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on the lives of purchasers of annuities who were under age, the State was treating them as advantageously as the holders of perpetual annuities, to whom interest was paid at 4 per cent. These communications having been favourably received, he developed them in a remarkable report, which took the form of a treatise, accompanied by proofs certified to by his coadjutor, Hudde. 'As has been made clear to us by reasons which are perfectly well known to us,' he writes, 'it is much preferable to negotiate stock on annuities which are certain to be redeemed in the course of nature, rather than on perpetual annuities or redeemable stock. On the other hand, it is more advantageous for private individuals who employ the surplus of their savings in augmenting their capital, to invest their money in life annuities rather than in annuities or interest at 4 per cent., for although these same annuities are now being bought at $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the profit upon them is comparatively much greater than upon an annuity of 4 per cent. I have, therefore, to submit very respectfully to their Noble and High Mightinesses the unanswerable proofs of my assertions, and feel bound at the same time to defer to their wish of having this demonstration in writing.'

This report, which was entered in the register of the

resolutions of the States, was distributed to the members of assembly under this title: 'On the Value of Life Annuities as compared with Perpetual Annuities.' It did honour to the Grand Pensionary's financial learning. In being the first to point out the method which might serve for the almost exact calculation of life annuities, De Witt had prepared the way for his famous successor, Halley, and to him must be ascribed the discovery of the tables of mortality to which twenty years later Halley gave the name which they still retain.

The States of Holland did not, however, think the moment opportune for immediately carrying out De Witt's proposals. Although willing to constitute life annuities, they did not venture to reduce the rate of interest at which they were paid, but left it at $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. They had already commenced by borrowing at this rate 2,000,000 florins, to which they shortly after added another million, to reimburse the towns which had advanced that sum, in the vain hope of recovering it from the tax on corn which had not been collected. This financial operation having succeeded, two fresh loans of 3,000,000 florins were issued on the same conditions, and followed a few months later by two others of 4,000,000, in addition to 1,000,000 borrowed on perpetual annuities. These repeated loans were shortly to increase the amount paid in annuities from 5,580,956 florins, to which it had been reduced, to 11,000,000, of which a portion, however, was only a temporary liability.

In order that the credit of the province should be in no danger of injury, the States of Holland wisely determined to insure the payment of the interest by setting aside funds that would be at least sufficient to meet it. A duty of eight sous per florin was levied on the price of all seats in public carriages and boats. Private carriages and horses as well as yachts were subject to a tax varying from twenty florins for a one-horse carriage, to one hundred florins for a carriage and six. A tax of two sous on each cask was levied on beer. These two taxes were immediately farmed out, and the States obtained thus in advance the whole sum necessary for guaranteeing the repayment of the loans.

These funds not being sufficient, the Grand Pensionary proposed a further reduction in the annuities by lowering the rate of interest from 4 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., by which the State would benefit to the amount of 233,412 florins a year. In spite of his arguments, which were supported by the deputies of Dordrecht, Delft, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam, but opposed by those of Leyden and Haarlem, the States of Holland, fearing to give encouragement to still greater reductions in the future, stopped at a half measure; instead of lowering the rate of interest to the extent of one-half per cent. they contented themselves with deducting 5 per cent. from the interest, thus practically reducing it to $3\frac{3}{4}$ instead of $3\frac{1}{2}$. In order to have at their disposal the funds they required, the States of Holland were obliged to make up the difference by means of a deduction from their sinking fund, which the Grand Pensionary had wished to retain at its original amount, but which was reduced from 800,000 to 500,000 florins.

When it became necessary to provide not only for the preparations for war, but for war itself, the States could not rely on loans, nor on taxation intended merely to insure the redemption of the national debt. They were forced to demand fresh sacrifices from the taxpayers. Proposals were submitted to them for taxes on pipes, tobacco, and even on shoes and hats. They preferred to revive the tax of one-half per cent., which was levied on all personal and landed property, on title deeds, shares, book debts, ships, merchandise, plate, silver, jewels, furniture, salaries and wages, including even annuities, to the great detriment of the credit of the State. The municipal magistrates were made responsible for the payment of the taxes, and in consequence of the difficulty of collecting them the towns were required, on the suggestion of De Witt, to furnish the amount in advance for the country districts. Five weeks after it had been enacted, the tax of one-half per cent. was doubled and then trebled; whilst at the same time, the land tax was raised one-half, and the capitation tax re-established on three different scales, according to the means possessed by the taxpayers. It even became necessary later on to have recourse to a forced loan in money and plate, at

a rate of interest fixed first at 2 per cent. and then at 4 per cent.

The resolutions adopted by the States of Holland impelled the other provinces to submit to the taxation demanded of them, and enabled the States-General to levy contributions also from the Country of the Generality. Means were henceforth not wanting to enable the republic to support the burden of the expenses which the war was about to entail upon her. Such were the happy results of De Witt's skilful management of the finances of Holland, which ought to have been one of his most indisputable titles to the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen.

He had shown no less solicitude in pacifying internal differences, though he had not been able to prevent their revival. He had busied himself in putting an end to civil dissensions wherever they sprang up. His intervention had reconciled the parties which were disputing for power in the provinces of Groningen and Overijssel. He had been more especially anxious to restore harmony between all the members of the Assembly of the States of Holland, without which that province would no longer have retained the direction of the government of the republic. He had removed his two principal adversaries, Gaspard Fagel and Van Beuningen, who had detached themselves from the republican party, after having long served it; Fagel with impetuous ardour, and Van Beuningen with a fidelity which hitherto had not failed.

In order that he might no longer have anything to fear in the States of Holland from the formidable resistance of Fagel, in his position as Pensionary of Haarlem, De Witt offered him the post of Secretary to the States-General, vacant by the death of Nicholas Ruysch, one of his most trusted confidants. He had refrained from supporting the candidature of his first cousin, Vivien, in spite of the pressing demands of his aunt, Maria Van den Corput, and had disposed of the claims of the candidate of the province of Utrecht, Kinschott, who was afterwards appointed a Judge of the Court of Holland.

The success of Fagel's nomination having been secured by

means of the support given him by the States of Holland, his prerogatives of office were further extended, through the right conferred upon him of sitting on all committees of the Assembly of the States-General. Fagel having thus, by right of his important functions, become the second personage in the State, De Witt hoped to have thereby secured such titles to his gratitude as would assure him the valuable services he expected from his co-operation. His expectations were doomed to be disappointed. Fagel, whose portrait represents him with a broad forehead, denoting great powers of application, compressed lips and a sly expression of countenance, was as crafty as he was ambitious. While appearing to be on friendly terms with the Grand Pensionary, in order to obtain the post he coveted, he was much more concerned in gaining the favour of the Prince of Orange, in the hope of obtaining pardon for the part he had played with regard to the Perpetual Edict, and, while concealing his designs by a hypocritical pretence of agreement with De Witt, he was preparing to take the lead of the Orange party.

The Grand Pensionary counted, moreover, on insuring the success of his policy, by getting rid of Van Beuningen, who had not yet quitted the Hague to take up his post as ambassador at the English court. So long as the Prince of Orange had not been admitted into the Council of State, Van Beuningen, who was desirous of reopening for him the road to his ancestral power, had refused to absent himself. De Witt had vainly urged him to proceed to England, after the interview between the Duchess of Orleans and Charles II., in order that he might closely watch the course of negotiations between the courts of France and England. Van Beuningen replied 'that if the Grand Pensionary thought the matter so pressing, he could make the journey himself,' adding, 'that in his opinion there did not appear to be any necessity for so much precipitation.' But De Witt succeeded in bringing the States over to his views, and they imperatively insisted on the departure of their ambassador. Van Beuningen once out of the way, the Grand Pensionary profited by his absence to take active measures for securing the assistance and support of the town

of Amsterdam, whose defection might be the signal for a change of government. When Van Beuningen returned from England, he found the magistracy of that town once more reconciled to the republican party, from which he had wished to sever it.

The town of Amsterdam was divided between two rival factions, headed by Valkenier and Hoofdt, who were contending for the post of chief burgomaster. Valkenier had at first distinguished himself amongst the vehement defenders of the republican party, having been, with Fagel, foremost in voting for the Perpetual Edict. He had never ceased, moreover, to lavish flatteries on the Grand Pensionary, and at the period of his last election had been one of the first to propose the increase of his salary, even beyond the amount decided on by the States. Notwithstanding De Witt's habitual reserve with regard to his personal interests, he had displayed feelings of gratitude towards him, and had expressed himself as 'indebted to him for the satisfaction he had received.' This good understanding was soon troubled by the ambition of Valkenier, who, fearing to remain in a secondary position in the republican party, offered his services to the Orange party, in the hope of becoming one of its principal leaders. Sullen and envious, he was ardent in the pursuit of power, and very quick in discovering anything that he thought might be useful in opening to him a way into the government.

De Witt, unable to retain confidence in Valkenier, put forward in opposition to him Hoofdt, one of the leading members of the council of Amsterdam. According to Temple, 'Hoofdt was an honourable man, of noble sentiments, who had inherited great wealth from his ancestors. He had a frank and open disposition, and joined to considerable acquirements great delicacy of mind. But he lost a great part of his advantages owing to a heedlessness which he even liked to parade. He was satisfied with holding in his hand all the power that can be obtained in a town, without seeking for it or making use of it.' The Grand Pensionary succeeded in getting him appointed burgomaster. 'M. de Witt,' writes Pomponne, 'regains thus, by means of this town

which has so much weight in the assemblies, that influence which for some time past had been lost to him. The party of the Prince of Orange has now been worsted.' 'In the letter you have done me the honour of addressing to me,' writes Pomponne again to Lionne, 'you are correct in your supposition as to the mortification which M. van Beuningen has felt in consequence of this. Although he has fallen back on philosophy, his philosophy has hitherto imposed on no one. He openly professes that he wishes to enjoy the tranquil haven into which a species of tempest seems to have driven him, and to take advantage of the repose which he would never have found in public business, and which he experiences by withdrawing from it. But though he talks thus stoically to everybody, no one believes him.'

The success, little more than apparent, which De Witt had obtained, was but ephemeral, and Louis XIV. was rejoicing over the fresh rivalries which appeared to him imminent. 'I was very glad to hear,' he writes to Pomponne, 'that, in the election of the new burgomaster of Amsterdam, the party of Van Beuningen had yielded to that which opposed him, and which was supported by De Witt; because this success, which increases for the moment the authority of the Grand Pensionary and weakens the influence of the Prince of Orange, will only serve to make De Witt more irreconcilable with the King of England and with those who wish for the Prince's elevation. This incident cannot fail, moreover, to increase the bitterness and hostility of those persons who have a share in the government of the United Provinces, so that, whichever way I consider it, I find it equally good and advantageous for my interests.' The demands of the Orange party, and the hesitation and resistance of the republican party, which would not recognise in time the necessity for giving a chief to the army, in view of an approaching war, were soon to justify these forebodings of evil.

Disputes were renewed on the occasion of the salary demanded for the Prince of Orange as Councillor of State. The States-General were disposed to grant him 25,000 florins, half of which was to be paid by the States of Holland. The latter,

notwithstanding the proposal of the members of the nobility, would not agree to a larger grant than 12,500 florins, and were supported by the Council of State. They demanded that the Prince's salary should be paid in part out of the federal budget appropriated to the ordinary war expenditure, and would not themselves contribute more than 2,500 florins, requiring at the same time an increase of pay for the two major-generals. The Council of State opposed this division of expenses; the other provinces, ill-disposed towards Major-General Wurtz, who was distrusted by the Orange party, opposed the proposal to raise the pay of the chiefs of the army, and the States of Guelders declared that they would only consent to it on condition that a salary of 25,000 florins was granted to the Prince of Orange. These disputes had already revived old rivalries between the Provinces, when the appointment of a captain-general, being forced upon the States-General before the period that they had fixed upon, destroyed the accord brought about with so much difficulty by the Grand Pensionary.

By the terms of the convention concluded under the name of 'Act of Harmony,' which had opened to the son of William II. the entrance to the Council of State, the Prince of Orange could not be appointed, or even proposed, as captain-general till he had completed his twenty-second year, which he would only attain in November 1672. This convention, whose chief aim had been to pronounce the offices of stadtholder and captain-general incompatible, by forbidding the union in the same hands of the military and civil power, guaranteed the continuance of the republican government; De Witt, therefore, thought it advisable not to allow any further discussion of the Act lest it should be in any way imperilled. Moreover, the youth of the Prince, his presumed ignorance of military science, and the intercourse he was keeping up with his uncle Charles II. at the moment when that King was negotiating with the King of France a coalition against the republic, justified in some measure the distrust which was shown towards him. The Grand Pensionary could not consent to the defence of the Fatherland being committed to him before he had earned

the confidence of the nation, and wished him to begin by accompanying the army as a member of the Council of State, in order thus to prepare himself to command it.

This prudent policy of waiting was counteracted by the hostility of the States of Guelders reviving the animosity between the Orange and the republican parties. On the occasion of the disputes relative to the salary of the Prince as Councillor of State, the States of Guelders had conferred on him the title of captain- and admiral-general elect. The deputies of Holland to the States-General gave dangerous publicity to this resolution by denouncing it as contrary to the engagements that had been entered into to adjourn any election in favour of the Prince of Orange till he had completed his twenty-second year, and they required the deputies of Guelders to expunge from the records of the Federal Assembly the debate of the States of their province. The latter would not allow themselves to be dictated to. They desired their deputies to put plainly before the States-General the necessity for anticipating the appointment with regard to which they were accused of having illegally taken the initiative.

The Orange party responded to this appeal with an impetuosity that carried away all the provinces, including that of Utrecht, which, though accustomed to follow the lead of Holland, joined in the movement. The hope, by giving satisfaction to his nephew, of diverting the King of England from a defection which became each day more threatening, could not fail to encourage this movement. The Prince of Orange himself came forward. Not satisfied with writing to the principal deputy of the States of Utrecht, Amerongen, who had just been appointed minister of the States-General at the court of the Elector of Brandenburg, begging him not to leave till he had assumed the direction of this business, which, he said, was making a great sensation, he took advantage of a visit paid him by the Grand Pensionary to represent to De Witt that, having entered upon his twenty-second year, he ought not to be obliged to wait till he had completed it, before being appointed captain-general. The Grand Pensionary appealed with inflexible obstinacy to the letter of the Act of

Harmony, and did not conceal from him his surprise at his pretensions. But the States of Holland, on whom De Witt counted to get the better of the Prince, disappointed his expectations, at the moment when he was hoping to bring over the other provinces to more conciliatory dispositions. 'What is deplorable,' he writes, 'is, that it is the members of Holland who, in their immoderate zeal, wish, by breaking solemn conventions, to aid in laying the foundations of servitude.'

Early in December the deputies of Enckhuysen ventured to demand all at once the immediate nomination of the Prince of Orange as captain-general, and the nobles who were present at the sitting eagerly supported their proposal. The Grand Pensionary, as may be inferred from the curious manuscript letter to his brother, did not allow himself to be disconcerted, and demanded, in order that nothing should be done hurriedly, that the question should be put on the orders of the day. In the afternoon sitting, he represented vehemently to the States that the proposal of Enckhuysen ought not to be taken into consideration. He opposed it as dangerous to the republic; according to him, all sorts of dangers might result if the command of the army were hastily given over to a young prince who had as yet had no opportunity of showing his military talents. De Witt, moreover, pleaded the instructions he had received, and the oath he had sworn, and declared that he could not without breaking it allow the reversal of previous resolutions, unanimously agreed to, to be put to the vote. The authority with which he spoke cut short all discussion for the time being.

The deputies of Leyden and Haarlem, who had at first pronounced in favour of the proposal of the deputies of Enckhuysen, contented themselves with giving notice that they should consult their municipalities. They demanded, however, that the proposals for such levies should be adjourned, declaring that they would refuse their consent to the increase of the army so long as it had not the Prince of Orange for its chief. 'Amongst the deputies of the towns of Holland,' writes the French correspondent Bernard, 'there are some, though few, who are in favour of the House of

Orange from inclination, others from ambition, or to annoy those who are at present at the head of affairs. As for the greater number, they consider that a chief ought to be given to the army in the present conjuncture. Even Major-General Wurtz has declared that he should serve more willingly and with greater success if the Prince were placed at the head of the army, because his officers would show greater obedience, and his soldiers more courage. M. de Ruyter says the same with regard to the sailors, so that there are some who not only consider that it would be advantageous, but that it is indispensable that this election should be made.'

The necessity for speedily terminating this difficulty obliged the Assembly to consult the councillor-deputies, who were more especially charged with the conduct of military affairs. Only five of them took part in the deliberations, and they pronounced unanimously in favour of the appointment of the Prince of Orange. They invoked the recollection of Prince Maurice of Nassau, who had been entrusted with the command of the army at the age of eighteen; urged the necessity of giving speedy satisfaction to the populace, the army, and the other provinces; dwelt upon the hopes of a reconciliation with England; and represented that the anticipation by a few months of an appointment so advantageous to the country, would in no way strike at the principle guaranteed by the Act of Harmony.

A debate could no longer be avoided, and three days later it was resumed with all the vehemence of the passions which divided the Assembly. The nobles and the deputies of Amsterdam, Leyden, Haarlem, and Enckhuysen approved the proposal of the councillor-deputies, and nearly all the deputies of the small towns appeared also disposed to support it. But the deputies of Dordrecht, Rotterdam, Delft, Hoorn, Gouda and Alkmar, as well as those of Monnikendam and Brill, were opposed to any derogation from the conventions of the Act of Harmony. The deputies of Dordrecht offered the most vehement opposition to such a course. They were encouraged in their suspicions and doubts by Jacob de Witt, who could not forget that he had been one of the

victims of the attempt of the last stadtholder. They protested against a concession which, according to them, would only be to the demands of preachers and the lower orders, and declared that they would not submit to slavery for the purpose of purchasing the alliance with England. The unexpected support, however, which the appointment of the Prince of Orange met with in the Assembly of which the republican party had hitherto been the masters, showed De Witt that he must no longer remain intractable. He was forced to recognise that the public interest was engaged in this appointment. 'It is asserted,' he writes to De Groot, 'that it may have the happy result of inducing concord in the State, by giving satisfaction to the other provinces, by restoring confidence to the army, and by disposing the people to support taxation more willingly.' In accordance with his proposal and the urgent request of the deputies of Zealand, the States of Holland resolved to bring under deliberation the instructions intended for the captain-general.

This resolution gave the republican party hopes of gaining time. The Grand Pensionary was still confident of being able to delay or, at least, to lessen the danger by the precautions he meant to take for preventing a change of government. At his suggestion, the commissioners of the States of Holland, who were associated with the councillor-deputies for the purpose of drawing up a plan of action, demanded and obtained that the captain-general of the United Provinces should be obliged to swear to maintain the Perpetual Edict suppressing the stadtholdership in the province of Holland, and prohibiting its re-establishment.

After some days' consideration, they approved also the principal articles destined to limit the powers of the commander-in-chief of the federal army. In accordance with the Act of Harmony, the captain-general was to be declared ineligible to the office of stadtholder of any other province, and must even promise to refuse it if offered. From excess of precautions, the prerogatives of the stadtholdership, that is to say, the appointments to municipal offices, intervention in matters of religion, justice, police, and finance, and media-

tion in the case of disputes between the provinces, were excluded from his functions. He was not even to exercise by way of compensation those which seemed inseparable from his office. He could not directly appoint the officers of the army, and had only the right of recommending them either to the States of the Provinces, or to the States-General, according to the importance of their rank, and he had no power to dispose of the commands of fortresses, except in the case of those conquered from the enemy. Moreover, he was not authorised to issue directly the *patents*, that is to say, the marching orders for troops in the territory of the provinces. Lastly, his authority was subject to that of the commissioners, who in times of war stood towards him in the place of the States-General; he was charged with carrying out the decisions arrived at by them by a majority of votes, and must content himself with the right of assisting at their deliberations, and giving his opinion first, which he could repeat in case of an equal division of votes. Not only was the separation between the civil and the military authority thus guaranteed, but the military authority was henceforth only to be exercised within narrow limits, which placed obstacles in the way of princely domination.

Precautions so restrictive as these, but which might readily have been agreed to, ought to have appeared sufficient; but instead of declaring themselves satisfied, the defenders of the republican government demanded that the term of office of the captain-general should be limited to a single campaign, while the partisans of the Prince of Orange wished it to be conferred for life. They thus provoked a conflict with other provinces, and at the same time rendered fresh divisions within the States of Holland inevitable. Animosities which had been appeased rather than quenched were revived, and the Assembly found itself once more divided into two hostile parties.

On one side, the nobles and deputies of Enckhuysen, Haarlem, and Leyden demanded that the command should be conferred for life, considering this indispensable to the authority which the captain-general ought to exercise over the troops, and to the wise direction of military affairs. On the other

hand, the deputies of Dordrecht, Delft, and Rotterdam rejected it, and declared that the Prince of Orange ought to be the less exacting in his demands as he would have already the advantage of an appointment to which his age did not as yet give him any right. They represented, moreover, that no permanent engagement could without danger be entered into with him till he had shown what he was capable of in a temporary command. The deputies of Amsterdam, while pronouncing in favour of a life appointment, were anxious for conciliatory measures, and demanded that the question of the command for life should be postponed till the legal term fixed by the Act of Harmony, provided the entry into office of the Prince of Orange, if only for a single campaign, were not delayed any longer.

The Grand Pensionary saw that he could not refuse to accept this proposal. He feared that the Council of Amsterdam might send Van Beuningen, who had returned from his embassy to London, to the Assembly of the States, and that he would not fail to contend with him for the direction of the government. He therefore hastened to put an end to the discussion by submitting to the States-General the instructions which the States of Holland had drawn up for the captain-general. These instructions having been adopted by the States-General, he demanded of the States of Holland the immediate nomination of the Prince. He then caused it to be decided that the command should only be conferred on him temporarily, with the power of renewing it for life when the condition of age stipulated by the Act of Harmony should be fulfilled.

The States-General were not satisfied, and addressed to the States of Holland long-drawn-out remonstrances, taking care, however, to do so only in a private letter, in the hope that an agreement might more easily be come to. The States of Holland repaired in a body to the Federal Assembly in order to reply to this message, and communicated to them the resolution they had just come to, and from which they would not depart. The following day they confirmed this notification by a manifesto in which they announced 'that they had gone

as far as they could go' in anticipating by several months the nomination of a captain-general, and they refused to make it definite before the Prince of Orange should have completed his twenty-second year. They protested that, in case of the refusal of the other provinces, 'it was not they who would be responsible for the national misfortunes.'

The Prince of Orange, however, was very nearly obliging them to attend to the remonstrances of the States-General, by refusing to accept the post of captain-general in the event of his commission being limited to the duration of one campaign. Feeling certain of the dispositions of the two major-generals, who, failing him, were determined to decline the offer of the chief command, he sent word to the States of Holland 'that they might spare themselves the trouble of sending any deputies to him, because he would regret to have to send them back with a refusal.' His best friends tried in vain to dissuade him from what they considered a youthful act of indiscretion. Van Beuningen, who, after being the principal agent of dissension, had joined the party of conciliation, advised him, according to a French correspondent, 'to accept, at any price, what had been resolved on by the deputies of Holland.' But he had to fight against the influence of Fagel, who, in order to push matters to extremity, encouraged the views of the Prince, on whom Van Beuningen had difficulty in making any impression, 'that young gentleman being tolerably firm and tolerably positive in his disposition.'

The attitude of the Prince of Orange could not fail to arouse the aggressive temper of the other provinces, and caused his partisans to regret the concessions to which they had yielded. The deputies of Leyden represented that, if Holland could not succeed in getting her opinion shared by the other provinces, it was absolutely necessary that she should yield to their wishes if the republic were not to be completely ruined. According to the curious manuscript of Vivien, Pensionary of Dordrecht, which so usefully completes the official account of the sittings, the deputies of Delft and Gouda had already sent to the Grand Pensionary a summons to proceed to a fresh deliberation. De Witt had cause to fear

that a capitulation would be inevitable, and, in order to avoid being reduced to this extremity, he acknowledged without further hesitation the necessity for a compromise. He announces this to his brother in a confidential letter which has been preserved in the family archives: 'In consequence of the disposition shown by certain members of the States of Holland, I could not do otherwise,' he writes, 'than set to work in the hope of bringing the matter to a favourable termination, with the approbation of the deputies of Dordrecht, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, and I am now discussing it with Beverningh and Fagel. We have agreed upon a scheme which I have consented to communicate to the deputies of Holland, with the view of trying afterwards to get it accepted by the States-General.'

This scheme, as it had been suggested by the members of the committee on military affairs, and more especially by Ripperda de Buurse, had for its object to bring about by anticipation a preliminary agreement on the definitive instructions to be given to the captain- and admiral-general when the Prince of Orange should have accomplished his twenty-second year; it only conferred on him as admiral-general an honorary title, which was to be granted to him at once provisionally, but would give him neither in the present nor in the future any authority over the commander-in-chief of the fleet. This was the best security that could be taken for preventing the definitive appointment being further delayed or hindered by fresh discussions. With this view, four provinces—Guelders, Zealand, Friesland, and Groningen—took the initiative in announcing that they now made choice of the Prince of Orange to be captain- and admiral-general for life, as soon as he should have attained the legal age, and that no further vote on the subject was to be required of them. Two other provinces—Utrecht and Overijssel—made the same declaration, while making their definitive consent dependent on the unanimous agreement of the provinces, to avoid offending Holland.

Unless the States of Holland chose to enter upon a path from which they could not turn aside, and whose dangers they

could not conceal from themselves, they must agree to the proposal for regulating in advance the conditions under which the commander-in-chief was to enter upon his office when he received his appointment for life. Five days after the first proposals had been made by the Grand Pensionary to their Assembly, they met together on Tuesday, February 23, 1672, and at four o'clock in the afternoon they arrived at an agreement. They began by conferring on the Prince of Orange the powers of captain-general limited to one expedition and subordinated to the conditions which they had already drawn up. To satisfy the States-General, they not only confirmed by an express declaration all his prerogatives as a Councillor of State, but they also granted him the command of all the troops, including those of the militia in the pay of the towns, which they had at first proposed to refuse him, and only excepting the companies of body-guard and cavalry which should be in garrison in their capital. They would not, however, consent as yet to appoint him, even nominally, admiral-general, for fear of striking an apparent blow at the authority of Ruyter, who possessed their entire confidence. These provisions being settled, they unanimously approved the scheme of definitive instructions, and placed on the orders of the day of their assembly in November, at which period the Prince of Orange would have completed his twenty-second year, his appointment as captain- and admiral-general for life.

The next day the States-General held a solemn sitting, at which all the members of the Federal Assembly assisted, to the number of thirty-three. Having secured the consent of the Prince of Orange, who was now satisfied with the guarantees given him for the approaching future, they conferred on him the temporary command of the army, and proclaimed him captain-general. Their resolution was solemnly communicated to him by the Secretary Fagel, who invited him to repair to their Assembly, in order to be invested in his office and to take the oath of fidelity to his instructions. On the day following he was received with all the honours due to his rank. While the joyful acclamations of the populace were sounding without, the President, Van Ghent, deputy of Guelders,

addressed to him a speech, in which he reminded him of his ancestors' services and encouraged him to continue their work, and thus to justify the hopes of the nation.

The States of Holland did not wish to appear less assiduous. They yielded to the wish of the Prince of Orange by fixing his pension as Councillor of State, which had not yet been definitively voted, at 12,500 florins. The nobles and the deputies of eleven towns recorded also their consent to his eventual nomination as captain- and admiral-general for life. Finally, the assembly deputed commissioners to convey to him the solemn congratulations of all its members. The Prince did not fail to respond to these attentions. He entertained them in the great hall of the palace, which had been placed at his disposal, at a magnificent banquet, of which the bill of fare¹ has been preserved in contemporary accounts, and which was prolonged till two o'clock in the morning. The Prince concluded it by proposing a toast, in return for which his health was drunk to the sound of flourishes of trumpets and salvos of artillery welcoming the new chief of the army. Concord seemed happily restored; but distrust and rivalry still existed on both sides. By holding out too long against the appointment of the Prince of Orange to the command of the army, De Witt had lost the benefit of the concessions which he had at last made. The delay that had taken place in the definitive nomination of a captain-general, and the restrictions placed upon his military authority, could not fail to perpetuate the grievances of the Orange party, while giving to the republican party only transitory guarantees, which were more apparent than real.

The Grand Pensionary took advantage, however, of this appointment to repair lost time, by no longer delaying the adoption of defensive measures which had been postponed till the Prince of Orange had been invested with the chief command. It was necessary to provide speedily for the

¹ The bill of fare comprised 600 pigeons, 110 turkeys, 500 partridges, 163 pheasants, 800 larks, 4 wild boars, 40 lambs, 16 calves, 8 deer, 40 hams, 500 pounds of French sweetmeats, 4 cases of oranges, 600 pears, 400 apples, and 250 pasties, large and small. The wines were Rhine, Chablis, Ay, and Frontignan.

organisation of the staff of the army. The States-General had already selected the deputies to the camp who were to represent the sovereign powers of the Federal Assembly with the new captain-general; the members chosen to form part of this Council of War were: Cornelius de Witt and Beverningh for Holland; Ripperda de Buyrse for Guelders; Crommon for Zealand; Schade for Utrecht; Couvorden, Lord of Stouvelar, for Overysse; Ysbrandt for Friesland; and Gokkinga for Groningen.

The use made of their powers by the deputies to the camp gave but a vain pretext for the recriminations of the partisans of the Prince of Orange, who had little to complain of beyond the obstacles sometimes put in the way of the movements of the army, in accordance with the prerogatives reserved to the States of the Provinces, with regard to the passage of troops through their territory. Beverningh, who was allowed by the commissioners of the States-General the chief direction, never failed to support all the measures proposed by the captain-general, and succeeded in having them carried out. While continuing to keep up a constant correspondence with De Witt, he proved himself a most devoted adviser to the Prince of Orange, 'towards whom he felt a growing affection,' having no other wish than to maintain entire agreement with him, in the interest of the defence of the country. The Grand Pensionary showed no less eagerness to satisfy all the wishes of the new chief of the army. He wrote to him with punctual regularity, and apologised when he was hindered by the business which pressed upon him. Being careful to spare him all annoyance, he was not satisfied with intervening to obtain the confirmation of the choice of officers recommended by the Prince, but was often the means of obtaining for him full powers in the making of military appointments, thus giving him loyal support. The captain-general consequently found himself surrounded by allies rather than rivals in authority, and in spite of all appearance to the contrary unity was maintained in the command.

The choice of general officers, which was contended for amongst the provinces, was only settled after a prolonged

contest. The two major-generals, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, and Wurtz, were confirmed in their appointments, with the exceptional pay of 20,000 florins. In spite of his advanced age, Prince John Maurice placed himself with a readiness worthy of all praise under the orders of a general of two-and-twenty. The Rhyngrove was given, as general, the command of the cavalry, with two lieutenant-generals under him: John of Welderen, who had till now been commissary-general of the cavalry, and the Count of Nassau-Saarbruck, who had distinguished himself in the battle of St. Gothard gained over the Turks, and won a well-earned reputation for courage. 'He had always been strongly attached to the interests of the Prince,' writes a contemporary; 'he only unbent to him, being proud and haughty with everyone else.' The command of the infantry was given to Frederick of Nassau, Lord of Zuylestein. His two lieutenant-generals were Count Königsmark, a native of Sweden, and William of Aylva, called a second Mars, who had already served valiantly by sea and land, and who belonged to one of the most illustrious families of Friesland; Count Hornes, *sergent-major* of the army, was given the post of master-general of ordnance. Viscount John Barton de Montbas, a native of France, brother-in-law of the ambassador De Groot, was chosen, concurrently with Steenhuisch, Lord of Heuwe, commissary-general of the cavalry, in spite of the dislike shown towards him by the Prince of Orange, which was so sadly justified. Colonel Kirkpatrick and Count Styrum (a near relation of the Prince through his grandmother) received commissions as *sergents-majors* of infantry, and Moyse Pain et Vin that of quartermaster-general. The fleet retained the leader whom it was accustomed to obey with entire confidence. The States-General renewed Ruyter's powers as commander-in-chief for the campaign about to be opened, and fixed his pay at 500 florins a month, besides allowing him at his own request a company of soldiers as his guard. They chose as lieutenant-admirals Van Nès, Joseph van Ghent—whose brother, Joachim van Ghent, was a lieutenant-colonel in the army, and who as well as his brother met with a glorious death the same year in the service of

his country—Adrian Banckert, and John William of Aylva, who was afterwards transferred as lieutenant-general to the army. The two former commanded the squadrons of Holland, Banckert that of Zealand, and Aylva that of Friesland. In accordance with the proposals of the States of Holland, Cornelius de Witt, deputy of the Council of War, was appointed deputy-plenipotentiary to the fleet. Having obtained the consent of the magistracy of Dordrecht, under whose orders he was, he accepted the mission, declaring to the States of Holland that, 'however dangerous it might be, he was ready in obedience to them to employ, with the blessing of God, all his care and all his efforts in accomplishing it with zeal and fidelity.' Convinced that a show of complete power was necessary to his authority, he induced them to place under his orders a detachment of ninety-four sailors, with a guard of twelve soldiers dressed as halberdiers and bearing the arms of the States on their uniform. The two deputies who were associated with him not having responded to the appeal made to them, the States-General, in compliance with his wishes, determined not to appoint any successors to them. 'They wished thus,' writes the Grand Pensionary to his brother, 'to cut short any ideas of dissension, negligence, or distrust, which might arise; and, convinced that everything is in good order in the fleet, they are anxious to show how satisfied the government is with your behaviour and your firmness.' Cornelius de Witt henceforth shared with no one the confidential mission which he had received, and which he was worthy to fulfil.

To prevent the naval operations being divulged, the States-General gave full powers to the committee which they appointed for the affairs of the navy, and excused it from rendering any account to the Federal Assembly or to the Provincial Assemblies. The President of the States-General for the week, assisted by the Secretary, was on this secret committee, the reports of which continue from March 19 till August 13, 1672. The Grand Pensionary of Holland retained the direction of it, and gave constant proofs of his watchful solicitude. At his suggestion all necessary measures were

taken to guarantee the safety of the ports and of the coasts of Holland. In addition to this the equipment of the fleet was no longer delayed. On the suggestion of the Grand Pensionary, the States of Holland approved the proposal to put to sea forty-eight vessels and to enlist 10,000 sailors, the States-General ratifying forthwith a resolution in favour of which they had already given their decision.

Six weeks later, a fresh expenditure of 2,196,000 florins was voted for the equipment of the fleet, which was to consist, for the approaching campaign, of more than 130 ships, of which 75 were to be line-of-battle ships and frigates. The Council of State, not satisfied with this armament, made a further demand for the construction of eighteen reserve vessels, which, having at first been adjourned, was finally decreed, with the eager consent of the States of Holland. In a long letter written to his brother-in-law, Hœuft, member of the Admiralty of the Meuse, De Witt urged him to cause the contingent of the Dutch squadrons to be completed; he begged him to use his utmost efforts, 'in order that we may,' added he, 'put into execution our old national motto, *Vigilate Deo confidentes*.'

The land armaments could not be carried out equally promptly or efficiently, in spite of the persevering efforts of the Grand Pensionary. Convinced at length that the war with France was inevitable, so far back as the end of the preceding year he had been of opinion that the same measures should be taken which would be employed if it were already begun. The army, in spite of the last levies, did not consist of more than 37,000 men, who were not all under arms. The proposal for a fresh levy of 20,000 men had remained in abeyance, in consequence of internal divisions. As soon as the preliminary deliberations with regard to the nomination of a captain-general had begun to restore concord, this levy was agreed to by the States of Holland, and the States-General gave it their approval. A sum of 4,300,000 florins was appropriated to it. It was to be effected within a space of six or eight weeks, and to comprise ten regiments of infantry and twelve of cavalry, representing 14,000 foot and 6,000 horse.

The strength of the army was thus raised nominally to 57,000 men, but did not really exceed 52,000.

Notwithstanding the urgent advice of the Grand Pensionary, the States-General stopped short in these measures; a proposal of the Council of State, demanding a second levy of 22,500 men, 19,600 foot, 900 horse, and 2,000 dragoons, remained under discussion till the month of April. In order to get it voted, the States of Holland declared themselves determined to take upon themselves, as their share, the cost of 12,000 men, whom they would form into a reserve corps for the defence of their province, and of whom they alone would have the right to dispose. The States-General, alarmed at this proposal, which would have struck a blow at their military authority, ended by giving their consent to the fresh reinforcements demanded of them, and the States of Holland did not persist in their demands. The army put on a complete war footing was to cost 9,000,000 florins, and to consist of 80,000 men, whom De Witt would have liked to increase to 107,000.

The Grand Pensionary worked indefatigably, in order that these levies should be neither tardy nor incomplete. He advised the States of Holland to encourage good patriots to take part in them by raising at their own expense soldiers and sailors, for whose payment they should receive commissions in acknowledgment of the services they had rendered. His correspondence throughout the months of February, March, and April 1672, and the letters of one of the Prince of Condé's agents at Brussels, Don Gomez Diaz, show the relations he was keeping up in Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, for the purpose of pressing on the despatch of the expected reinforcements, and preventing the active measures of French diplomacy from putting obstacles in their way. 'I hope,' he writes to Duke Bernard of Holstein, 'that I may soon be able to congratulate you, when you do me the favour of informing me that you have under your hand the three companies which are still wanting to your regiment, because, not doubting that your Highness has made choice of good officers, I would fain believe that the latter will acquit themselves in a few days of what they owe to their own honour

and the service of the republic.' Thanks to this eagerness, the orders of the States were promptly carried out; not only was it possible to complete almost entirely the first levy of 20,000 men, but measures were also taken that the next one, of 22,000 men, should be no longer delayed.

The employment of reserve troops was also decided upon, in order that all the able-bodied population might be summoned to the defence of the country. On the report of Vivien, the States of Holland submitted to the councillor-deputies for their consideration the proposal for a general armament, in which the city of Amsterdam had taken the initiative. After an agreement had been concerted with the States-General the executive measures were specified in a report drawn up by the Grand Pensionary, and the States of Holland hastened to vote them. They comprised the enlistment of militiamen (*Waartgelders*), of citizens, and of peasants.

The militia formerly set on foot but soon disbanded by the second stadtholder, Maurice of Nassau, was recruited and paid at the expense of the towns. It was to comprise 20,000 men, of whom 10,000 were to be called out first. Holland, completing at once the contingent to be provided by her, took for her share 5,830, divided into forty-five companies, each consisting of 120 or 130 men. The militia was not only intended for garrison duty, but might also be sent into the field to serve as a reinforcement for the army.

The States of Holland also perceived the necessity for calling the inhabitants of the towns to the defence of the country, and engaged to furnish a contingent of 5,325 citizens. On the proposal of the Grand Pensionary, they resolved to arm and drill them, forming them for this purpose into companies of arquebusiers in which substitutes should not be sanctioned; and they required the magistrates to provide for their equipment and supplies. The same steps were taken by the States of Groningen, Zealand, and Utrecht, who promised to send to the army a reinforcement of 1,000 men. The States-General enforced military service on the inhabitants of the other provinces, and sent important detachments of burgher companies

to defend the coast, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel de Bye, Lord of Albrantsward, Grand Master at the court of the Prince of Orange.

At the same time the peasants were put in requisition for the various entrenchment works. They were obliged to go through a firing drill at least once a week, and were divided into twenty-eight regiments, distributed by villages in companies consisting of about eighty men. By the terms of the resolution adopted by the States-General and reported by the Grand Pensionary to the States of Holland, the peasants of Guelders, Utrecht, Overijssel, and Holland, were drawn up in different detachments, to the number of 12,000 men, of whom 4,250 were recruited by Holland and a part of them despatched to the camp.

Efforts, therefore, were not being spared, nor were preparations wanting to render the land defences less inadequate, but time failed to reap the benefit of these military resources, and to give the country the impetus of resistance. The cost of recruiting proved an obstacle to the last levies; each horseman costing one hundred crowns, while the foot soldiers were paid from fifteen to twenty-two florins. The inexperience of the officers and the want of discipline of the troops, moreover, was a constant cause of complaint. While the citizens still responded with some eagerness and good-will to the appeal of the States, no service was to be expected from the peasants, who refused to allow themselves to be enlisted. A century earlier, it is true, in their struggles with the troops of the Duke of Alva, the towns of the United Provinces, and more especially those of Holland, had distinguished themselves by the heroic intrepidity of their inhabitants; but then, what powerful motives urged them on! For them the independence of their Fatherland and liberty of conscience were not alone at stake; the safety of each individual was in question, and moved even the most indifferent. The cruelties of the Spaniards, who had attempted to quench the rebellion in the blood of their victims, without pity for women or children, placed an insurmountable obstacle in the way of reconciliation. Moreover, the militia of the towns was commanded by chiefs as experienced as they

were brave. But even then many fortified towns were on the point of being surrendered without resistance.

Matters were quite different on the eve of a war which was about to set the republic at issue with the two most powerful monarchies of Europe. The nation no longer felt itself carried away by the necessity imposed on everyone of saving, at the cost of any sacrifice, his family, his fortune, and his life. A peace of four-and-twenty years had unaccustomed the country to war; internal divisions had weakened her, while the love of ease, consequent upon the prosperity of her commerce and finances, had not failed to enervate her people. They only cared to enjoy their wealth, without show or ostentation, in the shelter of the domestic hearth; their beautiful villages, splendidly adorned country houses, smiling gardens, and museums—which all Europe might envy—made them indifferent to the work of self-defence. The nation thought it had no cause to fear for its security, forgetting that nations, like individuals, must fight if they wish to maintain their existence.

The military service, which had fallen into discredit, was left to mercenary troops; and if old men still existed who had witnessed the last battles valiantly fought to complete the enfranchisement of the Fatherland, the younger generations knew only by hearsay the exploits of their ancestors. 'Is it possible,' writes De Groot, sadly, 'that the nephews and descendants of those who laid the foundations of our liberty, are so lax in defending what their fathers so gloriously won? Yet only manly and generous resolutions can guarantee us against the violent designs with which we are threatened.' It was necessary that the republic should suffer all the ills of invasion and conquest, before the military spirit would awake once more, and revive tardily the traditions of patriotic resistance. It was only after experiencing a sudden collapse at the first encounter that the inhabitants of the United Provinces regained in some measure their self-possession, and found themselves in a position to repulse the aggression beneath the weight of which their enemies were preparing to overwhelm them.

While the storm that was gathering against the republic

abroad was overwhelming the Grand Pensionary of Holland with a dark cloud of present cares and anxiety for the future, John de Witt had withdrawn himself to the enjoyment of the short period of domestic happiness which remained for him. Surrounded by his children, with his old father and his eldest sister at his side, he found in the marks of attachment shown him by his wife's family a faint echo of his past happy life. After losing Wendela Bicker, who made, as he writes, 'the true half of himself,' he had summoned to him his sister-in-law, Cornelia Bicker, who had married the wealthy Gerard Bicker van Swieten, her first cousin, for whom he had obtained the appointments of Councillor of Domains and Grand Huntsman at the Hague. The qualities best suited for the management of a household gave her claims to his confidence, if we may judge from one of her letters. She writes from Dordrecht to excuse herself to her brother-in-law for being unable to visit him at the Hague, referring to her maternal duties, which did not permit her to leave her little girls, and to her obligations as mistress of the house, which she amuses herself with enumerating.

To obtain for his children the permanent care of their aunt, John de Witt left the abode in which he had passed his married life, and rented for himself and his sister-in-law two adjacent houses, whose gardens communicated with one another. They belonged to the family of his brother-in-law, Diederik Hoeuft, and before being divided had served as a sumptuous residence for the former Secretary of the States-General, Cornelius Muysch. They were situated in one of the most beautiful of the avenues of the Hague, the Kneuterdijk. John de Witt selected the house situated at the corner of this road and of the little street opening out of it, Duke Street, so named in remembrance of Duke Eric of Brunswick, who had inhabited the house in the sixteenth century. It is still preserved with the garden belonging to it, and having become now, by a singular change of destination, the palace of the son of the King of the Netherlands, to whom belongs the title of Prince of Orange,¹ perpetuates the memory of the tragical

¹ The last Prince of Orange died 1834.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

end of him whose last abode it was to be. The Grand Pensionary established himself here three months after his wife's death, and one of his letters describes the troubles of changing house, 'of which all the fatigue and worry,' he adds, 'fall upon his sister-in-law.' A fortnight later, he had settled himself in his new home. 'We are now,' he writes, 'quite settled in our houses on the Kneuterdijk.' The library and the fine family portraits formed their chief ornaments.

Three years later John de Witt completed this family party. The assistance of his sister-in-law, Cornelia Bicker, who was obliged to give all her care to the infant to which she had lately given birth, was no longer sufficient for the Grand Pensionary. Moreover, the burden of public affairs, which weighed more heavily upon him day by day, left him no time to devote to the exigencies of domestic life. He found it necessary to relieve himself entirely from the cares of his household by making a joint establishment with his eldest sister Johanna, who lived far from him at Dordrecht, and whose watchful affection he had experienced since his youth. In the spring of the year 1672 she came to live with him with her husband, Jacob de Beveren, Lord of Zwyndrecht, former burgomaster of Dordrecht, who had just been appointed councillor-deputy of the States of Holland. The marriage of her two daughters permitted her to devote herself entirely to her brother. In the cruel trials which fortune had in store for John de Witt, she was to prove that she was the worthy sister of the Grand Pensionary, and that her mind was not less highly tempered than his.

Her old father, Jacob de Witt, who had always lived with her at Dordrecht, had followed her to the Hague. He had joyfully taken his place beside the hearth of the son in whom he gloried. De Witt's brother-in-law, Diederik Hœuft, husband of his second sister, Maria de Witt, writes to him from Rotterdam. 'We learnt with great pleasure from the husband of our sister, Madame de Zwyndrecht, that she, as well as your father, is going to reside with you in your house.' In spite of his eighty-two years, Jacob de Witt had not lost his interest in public affairs; he still continued to fulfil his duties

as President of the Court of Audit, which he only resigned after the death of his sons; and with alternate hopes and fears followed closely the course of events, in which his tenderest affections as well as his most immovable political convictions were bound up. As if to prepare himself for the blows of fate which were to assail him, he strengthened his courage by devout spiritual exercises; he was composing a volume of religious poems which appeared after his death under this title, 'The simple expression of my sentiments,' with a preface in these words: 'Christian, seek not here the poetry of the world, adorned by pomp of language; this is the pure fire of heaven. The author desired to sanctify his spirit by meditation. Enter into the same state of mind, and you will attain that end.' Jacob de Witt completed the last portion of the work by sentences which he wrote each day after supper, and he continued them for four months, till two days before his death, never allowing the grief of the father to get the mastery over the firm resignation of the believer.

The residence of John de Witt had become the family meeting-place. He constantly repeats in his letters his invitations to his last surviving uncle, Andrew de Graeff, to his brother Cornelius and his wife, and to his sisters-in-law, married, one to Jacob Trip, the other to Peter de Graeff, Lord of Zuydpolsbroeck and Ipendam. 'The pleasure which your agreeable presence gave here to the whole family in general, and to myself in particular,' he writes to his young cousin, Alida de Graeff, 'constrains me to thank you, and to beg you not to deprive us too long of this same pleasure; but, according to the promise made by your father the Burgomaster, my worthy uncle, and by yourself when you took leave, to do us the honour to visit us again shortly, next winter at the latest.'

De Witt kept up his intercourse with his relations by means of frequent correspondence. Sometimes he touches on private affairs of the most familiar or the most secret nature; sometimes he expresses himself confidentially on public matters. He finds time to send arithmetical problems to his young cousin, Alida de Graeff, for whom he showed great affection. 'I hope to enjoy again,' he writes to her, 'the

satisfaction of observing and admiring the great progress which you have made in a short time in the science of figures, and I shall do so with particular contentment and pleasure if I can contribute to it again in any measure, for which I will make every effort in my power.'

Always ready to give advice, he interests himself in the cares of his sister, who, on the eve of marrying her second daughter, was anxious to inculcate industrious habits on her future son-in-law, Nicholas Van den Dussen. 'When a person is perfectly independent, and takes no pleasure either in reading or in any personal occupation,' she writes to her brother, 'he must seek for society, and when that is done to pass the time, it leads to dissipation, which is a sad thing for his wife and all his family.' In order that the young man should not remain idle, De Witt drew up for him a rule of life.

While the Grand Pensionary took such interest in all family matters, he reserved his greatest care for the education of his three daughters and his two sons. The task appeared to him a pleasant though a weighty one, but he was not at liberty to devote all his attention to it. His two sons, John and Jacob, of whom one was eight years old and the other still in his cradle when he lost his wife, appeared to him too young to be sent away from home, and he kept them with him under the charge of his sister-in-law, Cornelia Bicker van Swieten. For his daughters he accepted gladly the hospitality offered them by their mother's family. One of their aunts, who had married Peter de Graeff, had taken them back to Bois-le-Duc after their mother's death, to the doctor whose care was still essential to them; and De Witt had accompanied them for the first half of their journey. The day after their arrival, his eldest daughter, Anna, writes to him: 'My dear Papa,—After we left you we continued our journey, and M. Fey told us we were nearly well. We hope to leave at the end of next week.' On their return from Bois-le-Duc he left his second daughter, Agneta, with his sister-in-law, who begged to keep her till the Christmas holidays, in order that he might take advantage of them to come and fetch her. He sent her niece

back to her every year, while the youngest of the three sisters, Maria, remained under the care of her other aunt, who had married John Deutz, and who also resided in Amsterdam. To pay their expenses their father sent their uncle, Peter de Graeff, the sum of 600 florins. As for his daughter Anna, De Witt sent her by preference to his sister, Johanna de Zwyn-drecht, and before the latter left Dordrecht to reside with her brother at the Hague, she invited her niece so often, that De Witt wished to defray the expense of these frequent visits. His two other daughters having in their turn gone to spend some time with their aunt, De Witt composes for them a letter in which Agneta thanks her for her kind reception of them, as well as for the good advice she had given them.

De Witt was glad that his daughters should seek some amusement away from their father's house, which his widower-hood and his occupations made sad and solitary; three years after his wife's death, in the beginning of the year 1672, he had not yet left off his mourning attire, and had caused his children to retain it also up to that time. He did not, however, wish to inflict his grief on them, and would not prevent his daughters from taking part in the pleasures of their age. They wrote him faithful accounts of these with naïve joy. Anna informs him of the invitations and visits which she has received on the occasion of the Christmas festivities; she sends him news of the old lady who had brought him up, Mademoiselle van den Linden, and describes to him her skating parties on the canal of Dordrecht and her drives on the ice in a sleigh driven by her cousin, the son of Cornelius de Witt. Another year she writes to him: 'We made up a family party to eat pancakes, and we all drank your health twice over.' Agneta was no less happy with her aunt De Graeff, whose daughters did everything to amuse her, both at Amsterdam and at their country house of Ipendam, near Utrecht. She entreats her father for leave to prolong her absence. The following year, when she returns to her aunt Deutz, in order to receive the care required by her state of health, she is taken to the fair, where she amuses herself with various games, and she informs her father that her cure will necessitate a prolonged

absence. She does not appear displeased at this ; but at the same time, with a sudden return of filial tenderness, she begs for his society, 'without which all pleasure appears to her dull, and in the expectation of his speedy visit, which she reminds him that he has promised her, she very humbly kisses his hand.'

From afar as well as near, John de Witt's superintendence never failed his daughters. During their absence, he required them to correspond with him twice a week. His eldest daughter having let a week pass without writing to him, the great statesman, whom the cares of the public business did not make less tender as a father, reproaches her gently, 'being unable to comprehend what were the manifold and urgent affairs which could have prevented her finding one short hour to write him a few lines.' In another letter he congratulates her on her progress in writing and arithmetic, on the knowledge she is acquiring of the Old and New Testaments, as well as on her good and instructive readings in history, French and German, advising her to avail herself, during her stay at Dordrecht, of the wise counsels of her aunt. His second daughter, Agneta, does not fail, on her part, to inform her father 'that she practises writing, dancing, and the guitar and violin, assuring him that she will employ her time well, in order to be better able to please him.' The education of his eldest son, who was still a child, was the constant object of his thoughts. Having sent him to his aunt De Zwynrecht to spend a few days with his sister Anna, he begs the latter to superintend regularly her brother's early studies.

As his eldest daughter grew up, he found it more difficult to resign himself to keeping her at a distance from him, being unable, as he writes to her, 'to dispense with such sweet companionship,' and when the separation is prolonged he begs her 'to take advantage of the first opportunity to return.' She had just entered her seventeenth year when a wealthy marriage was proposed for her. The Grand Pensionary objected to it, and in a long letter written to his brother-in-law Deutz, he makes known to him the reasons why he cannot consent to it. Although the name of him who was proposing for the young

girl has not transpired, it is not without interest to learn what were the reasons with which De Witt supported his refusal. He begins by stating that he has consulted the members of his family, without telling them his own sentiments, from the fear that they might too readily make their opinion coincide with his own. Fortified by their approval, he continues in these terms: 'This person has hitherto applied himself to nothing, and hence he must be looked upon as one of those idlers for whom I have always had a great antipathy, having learnt by many examples that people of that sort, once married, and not knowing how to employ their leisure hours, give themselves up to bad company, and consequently to a disorderly life. Moreover, I have always considered the chief happiness in this world to consist in an indissoluble union contracted with a person of an agreeable and conciliatory temper, all the riches of the universe being unable, in my opinion, to make up for the pain which an incompatible temper gives to all who suffer from it. I do not yet know absolutely what sort of disposition may be found in this person ; but I have learnt this lesson from my ancestors, that in the case of a marriage we should not make alliances with the children of parents whose characters are not pleasing. I myself knew the father very well, and the mother in some degree, and I consider their dispositions to be such that should the son resemble the better one of the two, I had rather carry my children to church in order to see them laid in the grave, than allow them to contract a marriage with anyone from whom nothing better can be expected. What I have hitherto observed in his behaviour has not served to relieve me of the apprehension that he may in fact too closely resemble his parents, and, in consequence, I consider that it is my absolute duty to refuse him my consent to his entering my family.' John de Witt had tasted the sweetness of conjugal life, and he wished that marriage should confer on his daughter the same happy existence that he had himself enjoyed.

It would have been a touching scene of home life for an artist, this picture of the five children grouped about their illustrious father, as if to console him in his days of misfortune

and trials, gathered round the venerable grandfather who sees his powerful race revived in them, while beside them is the devoted aunt who is their second mother. It would seem as if enmities and hatred ought to die out on the threshold of the peaceful home on which a thunderbolt is soon to fall.

We see the three young girls who afterwards became the wives, Anna, of Herman van den Honert, burgomaster of Dordrecht; Maria, of William Hooft, burgomaster of Delft; and Agneta, of Simon van Teresteyn d'Halewyn, who was also burgomaster of Dordrecht, was compromised twenty years later in the peace negotiations with France, and shut up by order of William III. as a State prisoner at Loewestein, where he found reminiscences of the captivity of his grandfather, Jacob de Witt, and whence he succeeded in escaping, and, after the death of his wife, took refuge in Surinam. According to the family portraits, Agneta was pale and dull-eyed; her delicate constitution required the greatest care. Maria, whose countenance reflects the gentleness of her disposition, appears to have been as weakly as her sister. Anna had more grace than beauty; she delighted in her father's instructions, and her liking for the pleasures of youth did not prevent her having a taste for serious studies. In one of John de Witt's letters to her, he himself represents her with her spinning wheel beside her, reading the little Bible in big print with gilt copper clasps, which she asked for and received as a gift from her father.

Of the two sons, the younger, Jacob, who died unmarried at an early age, was still almost an infant at this time; the elder, John, aged ten, 'naughty enough sometimes to blot his sisters' letters,' a noisy and boisterous child though often ailing, showed great aptitude for work when he chose to apply himself. He married his first cousin, Wilhelmina, daughter of his uncle, Cornelius de Witt, and through him has been perpetuated to the present day the direct posterity of the Grand Pensionary. He acquired by his studies and by his travels in Flanders and Italy a remarkable degree of erudition, which enabled him to enrich his library with numerous and well-chosen books, the catalogue of which, edited by the learned

Brævius, was published under the name of 'Bibliotheca Wittiana.' His merit did honour to his birth. A contemporary describes him 'as one of those rare men whom strangers note down on their tablets, and go to visit as one of the curiosities in a town.' He devoted himself to the worship of his father's memory, and employed himself with tender solicitude, as his correspondence testifies, in making a collection of all the documents relating to the death of the Grand Pensionary. In spite of the advances which the Prince of Orange appears to have made to him, he did not seek his good graces, but contented himself with filling the post of Secretary of the town of Dordrecht, which was conferred on him in his early youth. He died at the age of thirty-nine, without having ever had the desire or the opportunity of taking part in public affairs.

Such were the five children destined soon to be orphans. At the age of scarcely forty-seven, their father was approaching the end of a life in which, during his later years, no bitterness or anguish was spared him.

His brother, Cornelius de Witt, who had given himself up with the same indefatigable devotion to the service of his country, was enjoying, without any drawback, the happiness of domestic life. Magistrate of the town of Dordrecht, and Curator of the University of Leyden in succession to his father, he was also *Ruard* or Governor of the district of Putten in South Holland, where he exercised both administrative and judicial functions: on the one hand, in his capacity as Superintendent of Bridges and Roads (*Oppendykraaf*) and President of the Board of Inspectors of Dykes (*Heemsraden*); on the other, as Criminal Bailiff as well as Chief Civil Judge. Before being sent for the second time to the fleet as plenipotentiary of the States-General, he had petitioned that the succession to his office as *Ruard* of Putten should be conferred on his son. The Grand Pensionary had scrupulously refrained from supporting this request, 'considering that it would be preferable that some notable member of the Assembly should make the proposal of his own free motion.' The initiative was taken by the deputies of Amsterdam, and the States of Holland received the demand favourably. The

councillors and the presidents of the Courts of Audit and of Domains of the Province confirmed this resolution, declaring that, in consequence of the great services of his father, and setting aside the decisions which prohibited any transmission of offices, the succession to the functions exercised by Cornelius de Witt should be continued to his son.

His brother's glory had not overshadowed his own, but had, on the contrary, given greater lustre to its splendour. The expedition of Chatham, which he had led in conjunction with Ruyter, and which so brilliantly ended the second war with England by one bold stroke, had won for him tokens of public gratitude. Perhaps he had not been sufficiently reticent in expressing the natural satisfaction his success must have caused him. John de Witt seems to reproach him gently for being disposed to think too much of himself, and suggests to him to speak less in the first person in his official correspondence. 'You say,' he writes, "'I raised the anchor, and I set sail.'" I believe I myself have always, and more especially in similar circumstances, spoken in the plural, being careful to say *we* thought it right, in order to imply thus the approbation of the lieutenant-admiral or of the Council of War, which will doubtless always be considered more modest.'

The haughty temper of Cornelius de Witt needed the softening effect of his brother's prudent advice. After his appointment as plenipotentiary of the States on board the fleet, he had objected to any other deputies being selected, not choosing to consent to a division of authority. 'In the event of the States-General nominating as commissioners deputies with whom I have had no relations and might be in danger of not agreeing,' he writes to his brother, 'I had rather leave the fleet.' The Grand Pensionary, more conciliatory, blames him for showing such a touchy disposition, and informs him that he had not thought right to make known to the States his too hasty resolution. He begs him 'to avoid committing himself, and, in order better to serve the public good, to consent, at all events, to the appointment of deputies whom he could have no cause to suspect.'

Cornelius de Witt may indeed have given way to some feelings of pride, but the high opinion he had of himself appeared to him justified by the constant services he had rendered his country, for which he had always been ready to brave every danger and unhesitatingly to sacrifice his life. His countenance appears to have been the mirror of his soul; the proud and somewhat haughty expression was accentuated by the lengthened oval of his face, and the narrow forehead and compressed lips gave evidence of the determined energy of his character.

The relations of Cornelius de Witt with his brother had continued to be of the closest nature. During the time that he was charged with the diplomatic negotiations at Brussels, he had kept up a correspondence with him which was continued after his departure for the fleet. Throughout the entire naval operations, their letters, which have been happily preserved, enable us to follow, almost day by day, the course of events, while they complete by irrefutable testimony the proofs of their brotherly affection.

Cornelius de Witt, more fortunate than the Grand Pensionary, had preserved the faithful companion of his home life, who was closely associated with the vicissitudes of his political career. Maria van Berkel possessed his entire confidence, and had continued to be to him, during twenty-two years of married life, 'his entirely well-beloved,' as he calls her at the head of each of his letters. Keenly anxious for her husband's greatness as well as for that of her brother-in-law, who showed the greatest regard for her, she had often been the confidant and adviser of both. Cornelius de Witt made no important decision without consulting her, and acted in accordance with the advice she gave him. When the Grand Pensionary proposed to him, during the second war with England, that he should represent the States-General on board the fleet which was to attack the English ships in the Thames, he only accepted the offer after communicating it to his wife, being careful to impress upon her 'that it would not be advisable for him to decline the post.' He need not have feared that she would deter him from it. Inaccessible to weakness, Maria

van Berkel proved herself worthy, by her intrepid courage, of sharing the cruel trials destined for her husband.

To his happiness as a husband Cornelius de Witt added that of a father. He had, like John de Witt, five young children, of whom the two eldest were boys, and the others girls of tender age. The eldest, Anna, who was at this time only five years of age, married at fifteen Simon Muys van Holy, burgomaster of Dordrecht; the second, Maria, died unmarried; and the third, Wilhelmina, who was just born at this time, united later the two families by her marriage with her first cousin, the son of John de Witt, but did not live long enough to enjoy many years of her happy fate. The two sons of Cornelius de Witt, Jacob and John, the first a young man of nineteen and the other a boy of twelve when they lost their father, did not survive him long; they both died early, the younger at the age of twenty-one, his brother at twenty-two during the course of his travels. A week after the terrible tragedy which deprived him of his father, the elder of the two sons left his country, 'being unable to live any longer in that odious place,' as is stated in his mother's family record. He proceeded to Brabant and thence to Strasburg, afterwards took his degree at the University of Padua, was warmly welcomed at the court of Savoy, and died at Venice of small-pox. According to a contemporary narrative, he had foreshadowed unconsciously the misfortunes of his family and the ruin of his house in a representation of Seneca's tragedy, 'The Troiad,' which had been acted by the pupils of the Latin school at Dordrecht before the magistrates and the principal inhabitants of the town. He performed the part of Astyanax falling from the top of a tower into the burning ashes of Troy. 'Who would have thought,' observes this eyewitness, 'that this representation would be a presage of what was soon to come to pass? This family, so powerful from its great authority, has become a lamentable example of the scourge of revolutions!'

The two brothers, who had been so closely united in life, and associated in turns in the same greatness and the same misfortunes, were destined by fate to share the same death.

'The two De Witts, successively loved and hated, raised up and thrown down together:' such is the touching and faithful inscription traced by a contemporary beneath their family portraits, which deserves to be recorded by history. Both were to be struck down by the blows that appeared as if destined to destroy the republic, and to which they were to succumb.

CHAPTER XII.

INVASION AND RESISTANCE.

Military preparations of Louis XIV.—The French army and its leaders—Las audience of De Groot—Declaration of war—Acts of hostility on the part of the King of England—Attack on the India fleet—Aggression of the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne—Offensive measures advised by De Witt—Attempted attack on Neuss in the Electorate of Cologne—Its failure—Plan of a naval expedition to the coast of France—Attempts against English fleet—Cornelius de Witt sent as plenipotentiary of the States to Ruyter—Correspondence of the two brothers—The States-General obliged to remain on the defensive—A league for the defence of Utrecht vainly demanded by De Witt—Insufficiency of equipments and levies of troops—Reinforcements sent to the camp by the Grand Pensionary—The invasion—March of the French army—Attack and seizure of the fortresses of the Rhine—The line of the Yssel guarded by the Prince of Orange—Louis XIV. moves upon the Rhine, which is insufficiently defended—Orders and counter-orders given to Montbas—Passage of the Rhine by the French army—The Prince of Orange forced to retreat—Fatal dispersion of the army—Useless counsels of the Grand Pensionary—The Prince of Orange brings back a small part of the troops into Holland—Positions occupied by the detachments of his division—Naval battle of Solebay—Ruyter and Cornelius de Witt—Cornelius de Witt obliged to quit the fleet—The United Provinces secured from a naval invasion—Operations of the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster—They take possession of Overijssel—Continuation of the French King's conquests—Mistakes made by Louis XIV.—Expedition of the Marquis de Rochefort—Muyden saved—Louis XIV. awaits offers of submission at Utrecht—Distress of the United Provinces—Inundations—First steps taken by Amsterdam—Defensive measures resolved on by the States of Holland and advised by De Witt—His speech—Zealand repulses the invasion—Resistance of Ardenburg—Obstacles opposed to the French conquest—Opinion pronounced by Louis XIV.—Alliances—Diplomatic relations of the States-General with Denmark, Switzerland, and Spain—Treaty between the Emperor and the Elector of Brandenburg for the protection of the Germanic territory—Military assistance promised to the United Provinces—Necessity for gaining time—Policy of the Grand Pensionary—Negotiations between Charles II. and Louis XIV.—First overtures of peace made by De Groot—His return to the Hague—Deliberations of the States of Holland and the States-General—Full powers voted to De Groot—He returns to the French camp—Amsterdam pronounces in favour of resistance—The republic may be saved by peace or war—Services rendered by De Witt.

THE offensive alliance of the two great monarchies of Europe, France and England, made an invasion of the United Provinces

imminent. It seemed to place at their mercy a republic cut off from all alliances, and which had long remained disarmed. To complete her destruction, Louis XIV. had employed all the arts of diplomacy, wielded by the skilful hands of such a minister as Lionne. His finances, moreover, were in a condition to provide for all expenses, and Colbert promised him for the campaign on which he was setting out, 50,000,000 livres instead of the 35,000,000 which he asked for. The most formidable means of attack were at the same time furnished him by Louvois. He had at his disposal a numerous body of troops whose efficiency and discipline left nothing to be desired.

De Groot had given constant warning of the French preparations for war in his correspondence with the Grand Pensionary and with Fagel, Secretary of the States-General. As early as the beginning of the year 1671, he writes from Paris: 'Commissions have been given here for raising a hundred and twenty fresh companies of cavalry. Numerous levies are being made in Italy and Switzerland. Forty new commissions have been sent out for the cavalry, and a hundred for the infantry,' he added at the end of the year; 'all French officers serving abroad have been recalled, shoes are being roughed for ice, and a number of small bridges of rushes and reeds constructed for crossing rivers.' When, later on, war became inevitable, De Groot gave precise information as to the preparations for commencing the campaign. 'Four hundred fresh commissions,' he writes, 'have been sent for establishing a camp in the Spanish Netherlands, and troops are being sent into Catalonia, in order, if necessary, to annoy Spain. A hundred fresh commissions have been prepared for enlisting 5,000 horse; 27,000 are already mounted, and 40,000 are reckoned upon. The divisions got together for the campaign at Metz during the winter are to have their principal rendezvous at Rocroy.'

The naval preparations had been completed with equal promptitude. Louis XIV. was not satisfied with reinforcing his fleet by the equipment of fresh ships, but employed himself at the same time in the defence of the coasts of France,

by causing five arsenals to be constructed, at Brest, Rochefort, Toulon, Dunkirk, and Havre. For the last four years, Colbert had placed at his disposal a whole nation of sailors, by subjecting the inhabitants of the ports to a class regulation, that is to say to a naval conscription, which produced 35,000 men for manning the ships of war. The young nobles, who had hitherto neglected the naval service, were beginning to join it. The fleet, which in 1667 only comprised 60 vessels, now numbered 200, of which 120 were ships of war, armed with 5,000 guns.

The army had been increased by fresh levies to 176,000 men, and an exact list of the number of troops destined for service in the field was presented to Louis XIV. by Louvois. There were first the picked troops, comprising not only the regiment of French Guards, commanded by François d'Aubusson, Duke de la Feuillade, and the regiment of Swiss Guards, each reckoned at 5,000 foot, but also the King's household troops composed of various companies, viz. body-guards, gendarmes of the guard, light horse, musketeers, and royal gendarmerie, representing 2,900 horse, commanded by the most illustrious representatives of the French nobility—Duras, Prince de Soubise, the Marquis de Rochefort, and Louvigny, brother of the Count de Guiche and second son of Marshal Grammont. Next to these came the regiments of the line: forty regiments of French infantry, making a complement of 56,000 men, and twelve regiments of foreign infantry, amounting to 30,000 men; seventy-eight regiments of French cavalry, of which two were dragoons, and nine regiments of foreign cavalry, amounting to over 25,000 horse. Then came the field artillery and the regiment of fusiliers with the siege train, comprising 97 guns, 72,000 cannon balls, 600 bombs, and 15,000 grenades, to which were added three pontoon trains as well as two floating redoubts which could easily transport 3,000 men. With regard to the commissariat service, to which Louvois had always given his closest attention, and which demanded the carriage of no less than 258,900 rations, it was organised in such a manner as to provide for all the wants of the troops. With such an army, which might be reckoned at 110,000 or 120,000

men, Louis XIV. 'possessed an escort which would allow him to take a quiet little journey in Holland.' It is thus he announces to Vauban the speedy opening of the campaign. The military renown of the King's principal lieutenants, Condé, Turenne, Luxemburg, and Vauban, was a sure presage of victory.

Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, the hero of Lens, Nordlingen, Friburg, and Rocroy, whom the last intrigues of the Fronde had made a traitor to France, had been, as it were, reconquered from Spain by the peace of the Pyrenees. His glory had illumined the early years of the reign of Louis XIV. with so bright a lustre that even his desertion could not overshadow it. Impatient to condone his errors by means of fresh exploits, he appeared destined to snatch victory once more by his unerring glance, as well as by the boldness of his manœuvres.

Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne belonged, like Condé, to a princely race, and was proudly satisfied with styling himself Viscount Turenne, without assuming the title of Marshal, which had been conferred on him in the year 1660, in recompense for his loyalty and for the services rendered by him as conqueror of the Fronde. His military renown was such, that Louis himself apologises 'for very audaciously giving him orders.' Possessed of the faculty of foreseeing and reckoning upon every possible event, he had no rival amongst the military men of his age in the tactics of scientific war. His natural prudence had acquired boldness from the habit of success, and the rapidity of his conquests was only equalled by the vigilance with which he maintained them.

Beside Condé and Turenne, François Henri de Montmorency Bouteville, who had become by his marriage Duke of Luxemburg, appeared as the inheritor of their military glory. Born after the death of his father, who had lost his life in a duel, he had found in Condé a protector in whose school he acquired all those qualities which combine to make a great general. 'Nothing,' writes Saint-Simon, 'could be more brilliant, more wary, or more far-seeing, than he before the enemy, or in the day of battle, with an audacity and self-

possession which enabled him to see and to foresee everything in the midst of the hottest fire and the most imminent danger.' But dark clouds overshadowed the splendour of his budding glory. Corrupt and absolutely unscrupulous, inhuman and vaunting his inhumanity, he was of those who, with the commissary Robert, his worthy rival in pitiless severity, were about to arouse against France in the United Provinces the same hatred which Spain had incurred during the War of Independence.

The very opposite to Luxemburg, Sébastien Leprêtre de Vauban had merited from Saint-Simon the appellation of 'the most honest and virtuous man of his age.' He justified this praise by an elevation of character which enhanced the merit of his rare talents, by rigid honesty, and by his anxiety for the soldiers' lives, of which 'he was a miserly economiser.' Justly appreciated by Louis XIV., who took him under his protection in his early career and raised him to the rank of lieutenant-general, and subsequently to that of Marshal of France, he had rapidly acquired the reputation of being highly skilled in the art of siege and fortification, and had made himself known as an inventor of great genius. The superiority of his plans, which he was as competent to carry out as to conceive, allowed everything to be hoped for the service of France from the enterprises confided to him. He completed the glorious phalanx of soldiers whom Louis XIV. had the good fortune to have at his disposal, and who were to render irresistible the shock of his forces.

Full of confidence in the success of the campaign for which he had prepared himself with exemplary care, the King of France had rejected all overtures of peace, though without any desire to precipitate the war, as he wished to avail himself of the most favourable time of year. Having now no further interest in delaying the carrying out of his determination, and wishing to facilitate his rupture with the United Provinces, he was desirous of hastening the departure of their ambassador. As soon, therefore, as the first winter months were over, although determined not to depart from diplomatic courtesies, he impressed upon De Groot, who was

detained in France by ill health, the necessity for putting an end to his stay, and commissioned Pomponne to hold a last conference with the ambassador of the republic. Pomponne professed in this interview that he was ignorant of the King's schemes, and contented himself with repeating his usual recriminations against the States-General; but when De Groot asked him jestingly if it was looked upon as a crime for them to seek to defend themselves, he could not refrain from smiling. De Groot seized the opportunity to try to ascertain whether he advised him to leave the country. 'Pomponne refused to answer, and protested that the King would never give him the order to depart; but he acknowledged, nevertheless, that the ambassador of the republic ought not to remain any longer in a country where war was imminent, nor expose himself to the risk of falling out with those who might speak ill of his masters.' De Groot, in transmitting this communication to the States-General, obtained their authorisation not to delay his return any longer, and as soon as his sufferings enabled him to proceed on his journey, he hastened to obtain his farewell audience.

He repaired to Versailles on the morning of the 23rd of March, 1672, in great ceremony, and was introduced into the King's chamber. It was so crowded that there was difficulty in moving about; the most important personages in the kingdom had met together to receive the ambassador of the States. Louis XIV., seeing him walk with difficulty on the polished floors of the palace, said to him, according to a tradition preserved in the family of Peter de Groot, 'Take care, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, the path is slippery.' The speech made by De Groot to the King was as remarkable for its moderation as for the dignity of its language; he avoided all recrimination, and, without alluding to a rupture which was now inevitable, he persistently invoked the alliance between the two countries which the King of France was at that moment sacrificing to his passions. Louis XIV. answered him kindly that he would prefer not to converse with him upon the subject of the States-General, but that he retained a particular esteem for himself personally, of which he would give him proofs on all

occasions. While De Groot was waiting for an audience with the Queen, Louis caused the fountains of Versailles to be played for him, and continued to show him the most particular marks of attention.

De Groot set out without loss of time, and was treated during his journey with all the honours due to an ambassador. Before leaving France he could not resist predicting to the Chancellor Letellier the change of fortune to which Louis XIV. was exposing himself by so unjust a war. 'I gave him to understand before I left,' he writes later, 'that he must not suppose that the King had as many friends as people told him, that no doubt his power caused him to be feared, but that if ever a party could be formed powerful enough to oppose him, it would be seen to which side the balance inclined, and what satisfaction would be felt at the possibility of weakening a power which was already too formidable for the rest of Europe.'

As soon as the Dutch ambassador had crossed the frontier, the King of France issued his manifesto solemnly declaring war against them, on April 6, 1672. Pomponne gave preliminary notice to the Dutch Secretary of Embassy, Rompf, who, having married in Paris, where he practised as a doctor, had been authorised to remain in France, and he commissioned him to communicate it to his masters. A strict observer of diplomatic customs, the King paid no heed 'to the advice of some of his courtiers, who thought he did too much honour to a government composed of shopkeepers and cheesemongers.' Yielding more than ever to his natural presumption, Louis XIV. celebrated beforehand the conquest he was about to undertake. He caused a medal to be struck representing the sun dispersing by its beams the vapours issuing from a morass, with this inscription, alluding to the protection accorded by France to the rising republic: *Everi, sed discutiam*—'I raised them from the ground, but I will scatter them.'

This confidence was not shared by everyone, as we perceive from a curious memorandum of Condé's, and from the letters of Madame de Sévigné. Condé, having been consulted by

Louvois on the subject of the war with Holland, and requested 'to send an answer by return messenger,' writes to him in these terms: 'Sir, I learn from your letter the honour that the King of France does me, in wishing to have my opinion on the prospect held out to him, as it is set forth in detail by the report which you have sent me. Although it is not altogether agreeable to me to offer my opinion on a matter of such great importance, I have thought myself bound to obey the orders you have transmitted to me on the part of his Majesty. I have drawn up a short memorandum which I send you. I beg you will apologise for me to the King for the errors he will find in it, and do me the favour to believe that I am, sir, yours very affectionately at your service, Louis de Bourbon.'

In the memorandum here referred to, Condé does not hesitate to declare that he would have thought it preferable to transfer the seat of war to the Netherlands, at the risk of directly provoking the powers who were protecting Spain and whose interference appeared to him of little consequence. On the other hand, a war against the United Provinces, sheltered behind the Netherlands, seems to him full of danger. 'Their country is a very difficult one in itself,' he writes: 'the fortresses are strong, and most of them are situated on the sea, amidst marshes, or on immense rivers. The positions where they can be attacked so that a mortal blow may be struck them, are very distant from this kingdom.' Condé saw reason to fear also the alliances which they would inevitably secure, the advantages the States-General would derive from the assistance of Spain, the danger of diplomatic defections, and the exhaustion of provisions and ammunition, and without going so far as to predict the obstacles that might be placed in the way of conquest by inundations, he pointed out 'the disagreeable necessity to which the King might be reduced,' thus showing Louis XIV. in the distance the rock on which the enterprise might be wrecked.

'The Prince is much taken up with this important matter,' writes Madame de Sévigné; 'the other day a sort of madman came to him and told him that he knew how to coin money.'

"My friend," he said, "I thank you, but if you know an invention by which we can cross the Yssel without being cut to pieces, you will do me a great kindness, for I know of none." 'We are going to have a severe war,' she writes again, on hearing of her son's departure for the army, 'and I am in mortal terror. It is the most perilous campaign that has ever been heard of since the passage of Charles VIII. into Italy; the King was told so. The Yssel,' she adds, 'is lined and defended by 200 guns, 60,000 foot soldiers, three large towns, and another wide river before you come to it. Count de Guiche, who knows the country, showed us the map the other day: it is astonishing. . . . There will be 100,000 men withdrawn from Paris. For the last four days I have done nothing but take leave. Everyone weeps for a son, a brother, a husband, or a lover, one must be a wretched creature not to feel interested in the departure of the whole of France; this is a strange war which begins very sadly.' The first successes were soon to put an end to these fears, and only to leave room for the enthusiasm of victory.

It was not only against France, but against England also, that the States-General had to defend themselves. While Louis XIV., jealous of giving an appearance of greatness even to the excesses of his policy, was declaring war against the States-General in kingly style, Charles II. was commencing it by an act of treachery wholly inconsistent with the dignity of majesty. After concealing for a long period his projects for a rupture, the King of England was in haste to carry them out, in order to secure for himself the continuance of French subsidies. The seizure of several Dutch vessels which had been brought into English ports was the prelude to hostilities, and Charles II. announced his intention of not giving them up so long as his differences with the republic were not settled. Instead of giving the satisfaction demanded by the Dutch ambassador, Meerman, he announced to him his resolution to consider the Dutch fleets everywhere as lawful capture! Two days later this scandalous threat was carried out.

Having had information that a fleet of seventy vessels escorted by six ships of war was returning from Smyrna,

bringing to the United Provinces a rich cargo valued at 750,000 florins, Charles II. determined to take possession of it. He selected for this work of plunder Sir Robert Holmes, who, at the commencement of the last war against the republic, had distinguished himself by an enterprise of the same nature on the coasts of Guinea. Holmes received orders to assume command of the ships he would find at Portsmouth as well as those which he might meet with at sea, and set out with twelve frigates. He passed the English squadron, commanded by Sir Edward Spragg, which in concert with that of the States-General had recently destroyed the navy of the Algerian pirates in the Mediterranean. Not wishing to share with anyone the spoils of his coveted prize, Holmes allowed him to sail away without informing him of the instructions he had received. The following day he came in sight of the convoy near the Isle of Wight. But the commander of the Dutch flotilla had been informed of the danger; small boats had been sent to them with all haste by the ambassador of the republic, who was alarmed at the declaration made to him by the King of England, and they had thus secured themselves from surprise.

Holmes opened proceedings by firing a shot at the ship of Captain Adrian de Haas, who commanded the convoy, so that he might be forced, if he did not dip his ensign, to come on board the English commander's ship; while the second in command, Lord Ossory, was trying to lead Captain du Boys, who commanded the van, into the same trap. The latter, suspecting the artifice, would not leave his ship, while Captain de Haas, equally suspicious, ordered his lieutenant to go and ask for explanations from the English commander. The lieutenant had scarcely set foot on the deck, when he perceived the preparations for attack. He hastened to direct the sailors whom he had left in the boat to go back and warn the captain. The sailors, cutting the rope that fastened their boat to the English ship, bent to their oars, and in spite of a volley of musketry succeeded in getting away. Holmes immediately commenced the fight by attacking with his vessel, armed with thirty guns, the ship commanded by De Haas, whose artillery

was greatly inferior. In spite of this inequality, the latter repulsed his assailant and defended himself throughout the day with equal success against another English vessel, but was killed while valiantly doing his duty. In order to conceal his death, Captain du Boys, whose duty it was to take over the command, ordered the lieutenant to keep the flag flying, and the enemy was obliged to retreat with the loss of a ship.

On the next day but one the English squadron, strengthened by a reinforcement of five frigates, renewed the action at nine o'clock in the morning. The Dutch ships repulsed this second attack with equal success; but during a third, which took place the same evening, while Captain du Boys sustained the shock and lost his hand in the fight, Captain van Nès' ship was forced to surrender after the death of her commander, and sank, riddled with shot. Holmes took advantage of the disorder for which this loss was the signal, to penetrate into the centre of the convoy; but he could only capture three ships, and the fleet, assisted by a favourable wind as well as by the darkness of the night, got away from him. The attempt had thus been unsuccessful, and public opinion was loudly expressed against the ignominy of such an enterprise, which cast upon the nation the disgrace of their King's perfidy. Even the French court disapproved of this violation of the law of nations. When the news reached Louis XIV.'s minister at one of the principal German courts, he declared publicly that when the King, his master, made war on the States-General, he would not do so like a pirate.

Charles II. had 'thrown aside his mask,' as John de Witt writes to his brother, and did not hesitate to acknowledge that he had himself given the order to commence hostilities by this shameful surprise. On the very day when the news of the attack on the fleet of the United Provinces was spread in London, his commissioners were directed to inform the ambassadors of the republic, Meerman and Boreel, that the King of England had determined to break openly with the States-General. At the same time one of the Duke of York's gentlemen went to the secretary of embassy, and warned him that Meerman would receive orders to leave the country in the

same ship that had brought him there. The declaration of war, dated the following day, was published the next day but one, March 27, 1672, at noon. Three days later Meerman received his farewell audience and departed, leaving in England the ordinary ambassador Boreel, who received permission to remain there for the present. 'There is nothing more for us to do,' he writes to De Witt, 'except to defend ourselves vigorously, and even to take the offensive in order to surprise the English by some sudden attack or by an unexpected invasion.'

With a view to impose upon public opinion at home and abroad, Charles II. thought fit to issue a manifesto in which he renewed accusations as vague as they were frivolous against the States-General, reproaching them with having sought every opportunity to annoy and injure him. The States did not think it consistent with their dignity to respond either to his passionate language or to his violent conduct, and offered no refutation to the King's accusations. While not choosing to publish the vindication which one of the members of the States of Holland had been commissioned to draw up, they left to Wicquefort—'who has since been seen,' as he himself writes, 'occupying a post worthy of his merits'—the care of answering the King of England's calumnies in a work entitled, 'Reflections on the present State of the United Provinces,' which refuted all the false pretexts put forward for a rupture.

At the same time, the States-General made it a point of honour to contrast with this brutal aggression made against them in time of peace their own scrupulous respect for the treaties which the King of England had violated in so audacious a manner. In retaliation for the seizure of some of their ships by Charles II. and for the treachery by which three vessels had been violently taken from their merchant fleet, they had at first placed an embargo on all English trading ships in their ports. Notwithstanding the advice of Meerman, who did not wish the bad faith of the English Government to go unpunished, the States of Holland represented to the States-General that, by the terms of the treaty of Breda, the subjects of the republic and those of England were to have,

in the event of a rupture, six clear months for the purpose of removing their merchandise. They proudly declared that though Charles II. had violated this clause the republic could not permit itself to infringe it. They demanded, therefore, that the English ships should have liberty to withdraw. The States-General approved this proposal by a resolution of May 14, 1672; thus by their own honesty making their enemy's knavery the more apparent and odious. The King of England himself felt humiliated, and gave up the ships which he had seized, refusing, however, to return those which had been captured from the Smyrna fleet. 'He considered them,' he declared, 'as lawful capture, on account of his settled intention of declaring war when he caused them to be attacked; that intention being equivalent to a formal announcement.' The justice of his cause might be gauged by such an argument.

Besides having to maintain war with France and England, the United Provinces had to repel the attacks of other enemies: the Bishop of Münster and the Archbishop of Cologne, whom Louis XIV. had made his allies. Before, however, declaring war, the two German princes had prudently waited till the Kings of France and England had given the signal.

The Bishop of Münster, after signing a treaty of offensive alliance with Louis XIV., had continued none the less his pacific assurances to the envoy of the republic, Amerongen, to whom he renewed his protestations of fidelity. He declared, however, that he could not oppose the passage of the French troops through his States, and at the same time he pushed forward his armaments with indefatigable activity, 'and his preparations,' writes Wicquefort, 'were those of a prelate who was thinking of quite other matters than repeating his breviary.' The States-General, wishing to be certain of his intentions, sent to him Jacob de Stouvelar, deputy of Overysse, one of the military commissioners. The Bishop received him courteously, invited him to share his repasts, but caused him to be always accompanied by guards, who never lost sight of him and watched him even in his own room. As soon as he thought himself relieved from all necessity for caution, he sent

him back with a letter to the States-General, in which he complained to them of a plot that had been laid against his life, and denounced the supposed guilty persons; these were the Grand Pensionary de Witt; Hoofdt, member of the Council of Amsterdam and deputy of Holland to the Council of State; Reigersberg, deputy of Zealand to the States-General; and Major-General Wurtz. This accusation was as senseless as it was impudent; not only were the persons at whom it was aimed the most honourable in the republic, but there were besides such divisions amongst them that it required complete ignorance of political parties in the United Provinces to impute to them any project which could have brought them into agreement. Not knowing what pretext to make use of for a rupture with the States-General, the Bishop thus had recourse to the most barefaced expedients. He caused his letter to be followed by a manifesto in which he pretended that he was obliged to defend himself against a republic 'which suborned assassins to attempt his life, debauched his soldiers, corrupted the governors of his fortresses, and employed incendiaries to devastate his diocese.' He thus prefaced by a farce the tragedy of war.

The Archbishop-Elector of Cologne neglected for his part no precautions before leaguering himself with the Bishop of Münster against the republic. Having imposed submission on the town of Cologne, he retained in his principality the French troops whom he had called to his assistance, and for whose presence on his territory he had no longer any excuse. Fearing that the States-General might demand their dismissal, and might think themselves authorised in the event of a refusal to invade his States, he adroitly took into his own service this body of auxiliary troops, which comprised about four thousand men, and obtained the consent of the King of France for them to assume the electoral scarf. By the aid of this subterfuge, he put his ally in possession of Cologne and other towns, such as Neuss, Keyserwert, and Dorsten, which Louis XIV. proposed to use as magazines and arsenals. At the same time, true to the policy of dissimulation that he had always found successful, he sent to the States-General a manifesto in which he

engaged not to violate peace or neutrality. He wished to avoid thus being taken at unawares by an attack which would endanger his principality, so long as the French army was not in a position to come to his rescue. As soon as he felt himself relieved from fears which he took care to exaggerate to the King of France in order to set a higher price on his co-operation, he joined his troops to those of the Bishop of Münster. Stating as the pretext for a rupture with the republic the assistance given by the States-General to the town of Cologne, and their occupation of the town of Rhyneberg, he announced to them that he made common cause with the Kings of France and England.

Taken by surprise by attacks from so many enemies, which, according to Temple's expression, 'came upon them like a thunderclap out of a clear sky,' the United Provinces appeared destined to be the victims of triumphant iniquity. But they retained none the less their faith in the success of a just cause. To place it under the Divine protection, the States-General, at the request of the States of Holland, ordered a day of fasting and prayer, which was fixed for the first Wednesday in every month.

Still they could hardly flatter themselves that they would be able to resist the aggression which was now imminent, if they resigned themselves to awaiting it on their own territory, instead of advancing to meet it. They had now only one last chance of turning aside, or at least of delaying, the blow which threatened them, and that was themselves to take the initiative in commencing the attack. 'If we can in the first instance,' writes the Rhynegrave to De Witt, 'cause the enemy's designs in some measure to fail, we shall have won half the victory, more especially as regards the French, who are more given to flashes in the pan than to well-thought-out schemes.' By failing in the boldness requisite for commencing hostilities, the States-General made the Grand Pensionary's courageous advice useless.

Towards the close of the previous year, De Witt, who was fully aware of the strategic importance of the town of Cologne, had urged upon the States-General and the States of Holland

not to allow the Elector to take possession of it, and thus to be in a position to yield it to France. When the States-General had rendered the submission of the town inevitable, by delaying too long the assistance of which it stood in need, he was still not discouraged. No sooner had the French troops established themselves in the Electorate of Cologne, than he unhesitatingly and eagerly advised the adoption of offensive measures. In the previous year Louvois had been alarmed lest this bold determination should enter into the ideas of the Grand Pensionary. In a memorandum addressed to the Minister of the Elector of Cologne, Prince Furstemberg, he pointed out the danger of a sudden attack by which the fortresses the Dutch wished to seize would be carried without a blow being struck before reinforcements could be despatched, and the King of France would be obliged to alter his plan of campaign. 'I have taken the liberty,' writes the Grand Pensionary to his brother, 'to represent to the Spanish ambassador that France, by her King's last answer to the States, has given them legitimate reasons for beginning the attack and striking the first blow as soon as they can find a favourable opportunity.'

De Witt proposed, in fact, to surprise the town of Neuss, in the Electorate of Cologne, which the King of France had selected as a magazine for his supplies. His first suggestion of this scheme not having been followed by any resolution, he renewed it more urgently on the day after the declaration of war. By his advice, the States-General determined to request the Prince of Orange to desire Colonel Steeke to furnish information as to whether it was still possible to set fire to the magazine at Neuss, promising him a large reward in case of success. The attempt was immediately made under the guidance of Major-General Prince John Maurice of Nassau. A body of 1,800 horse and 600 foot was placed under his orders, and he received instructions to lead them through the French outposts.

This tardy expedition was not so successful as might have been expected, and the Prince of Nassau was compelled to inform the Prince of Orange that he had found the enemy on

their guard, and had been unable to maintain sufficient discipline in his troops to conceal his march. 'I have been very unfortunate,' he writes, 'in having been unable to do anything for the service of the State with so strong a force of cavalry, in consequence of the enemy having been informed of our designs. I marched all night in order to arrive at daybreak at the barrier which had to be passed in order to reach the enemy's quarters. Having been informed that there were only five or six troopers on sentry duty at that hour, I thought I might be able to surprise them without making any noise or giving the alarm to the cavalry quarters; but they had already been warned, not only at this barrier but also at all the quarters in the neighbourhood, by peasants who had seen us.'

Prince John Maurice of Nassau, however, marched rapidly to the little town of Huils, which was occupied by a French detachment, and took possession of it. 'I learnt,' he adds, 'that half a league from there, at another barrier in the direction of Meurs, there was a guard of three companies of French cavalry, who had perhaps already been joined by the three others intended to relieve them. I marched straight to the attack, but on the march the infantry as well as the cavalry took to firing so furiously at the hens and geese, that I went myself three or four times to each company to forbid this shooting under pain of death. This disobedience and firing were the cause of our missing these companies, for hearing the shots they sent out to reconnoitre, and having ascertained that we were too strong for them to wait for us, they retired very quickly before us.' The attack on Neuss, which could only have been carried out by means of a surprise, had thus failed; but the design that had fallen through was none the less skilfully conceived. Had it succeeded, Louis XIV. would have lost the arsenal which enabled him to make preparations at his leisure for the conquest of the United Provinces, and the farsighted care of the Grand Pensionary might, even at the last hour, have changed the issue of the war.

De Witt, moreover, left no stone unturned to insure to the States, on sea as well as on land, such feeble chances of

success as still remained to them. He was particularly anxious to prevent a junction between the fleets of France and England. The necessity for averting this danger, by forestalling the enemy, had been pointed out to him before war was declared, in the beginning of the year 1672, by the Pensionary of Zealand, Peter de Huybert. 'It will merely be necessary,' writes Huybert, 'to send into the Channel some twenty frigates accompanied by ships of war and fire-ships, and to direct them against the ports of Brest and La Rochelle. The port and harbour of Brest would undoubtedly present great difficulties; but it is thought that these may be surmounted. As for the attack on the French vessels in the port of La Rochelle, it has only to be attempted to insure success. It must of course be taken into consideration that France may before then have committed no act of hostility; but if the actions and intrigues of France are looked into closely the destruction of her ships would be an enterprise which may well be thought justifiable: it would only be snatching from the hands of that nation the iron which she is now heating in order to plunge it into our bosoms.'

The scheme was, indeed, by no means impracticable. The King of France, according to Pomponne, had at that time no fleet at sea; the coasts were destitute of troops, and the King of England was not yet in a position to unite his vessels to the French fleet. Immediately after the declaration of war De Groot, in his report to the States-General of his embassy to France, repeated the same advice; he had never ceased urging that the greatest efforts should be made at sea, representing that it was only there that they were feared. 'It is only the fleet,' he writes, 'that can make any impression on France, our land forces being only regarded as a means of defence.' He begged that it might be employed against the French colonies, and represented that fifteen frigates would suffice to take from France Cayenne, Martinique, and Saint Christopher.

If this latter expedition appeared too distant to be ventured upon, the same could not be said of an attack upon the French ports, which was boldly encouraged by Ruyter, who

offered to guarantee its success. 'The perfect knowledge of our coasts and harbours, of their strength and weakness, which this great sailor has acquired by so many years spent at sea,' writes Pomponne, 'showed him how easy it would be to attack them, and he assured the States-General that this diversion would prevent the King of France from sending into the field a part of his troops which must in consequence be employed for the defence of the coasts of Saintonge and Gascony.' De Witt shared this confidence, and was anxious not to await a rupture with France before commencing hostilities. He had offered himself to assume the command of the fleet, and to execute the orders of the State. 'The resolution which the Grand Pensionary wishes to take,' writes De Groot, 'is doubtless a generous one, and might have great effect; but we must take care that while defending the arms and legs, we do not expose the more honourable members which are essential to the existence of the body.'

The determination of John de Witt appeared, nevertheless, immovable. A month before the declaration of war he writes to his brother: 'We have a right to attack and destroy the French fleet wherever we may find it.' Three weeks later he writes again on the same subject: 'You know how seriously I am thinking of destroying the enemy's ships at Brest, in the Charente, and elsewhere, before they can join the English fleet.' 'It is necessary,' he adds, 'that, with God's help, we should perform some noteworthy action at sea before the French and English fleets come together.' The success of this enterprise only depended upon its prompt execution, but an insurmountable obstacle was placed in its way by delays in the naval preparations.

Prevented from carrying it out by Charles II.'s declaration of war, which deprived the republic of the free use of her naval forces, the Grand Pensionary boldly resumed against England the plans of aggression that he was obliged to renounce against France. When the fleet had received orders to meet in the Texel in the beginning of May, he hastened there with the commissioners of the States-General, in order to make arrangements for the naval operations with

Admiral Ruyter and his brother Cornelius, and immediately gave orders to put to sea. He overcame the ill-will or ignorance of the pilots, and succeeded in getting the ships out of harbour, but was still obliged to wait till the wind had changed, enabling them to set sail on May 9, 1672. The two brothers parted, confident rather than anxious, in order to carry on—one in the government, the other in the fleet—their patriotic duties: they were not to see one another again until the fatal day on which they met once more to share the same death.

The resolution adopted on board the flag-ship by the deputies of the States-General for naval affairs, in the presence of Ruyter and the Grand Pensionary, directed the fleet to advance towards the Thames; after making all preparations for a descent, they were to enter the river and to attack and destroy any vessels that might be found there. This scheme was hindered by fresh delays caused by the necessity of waiting for the squadron of Zealand, and nearly the whole of the English fleet took advantage of this to quit the Thames, the perfect calm which now fell not allowing them to be followed. Ruyter attempted in vain to come up with them. 'As ill-luck would have it,' writes Cornelius de Witt to his wife, 'we have not caught up the English fleet, which we expected to find in the Downs. We sailed there to-day, but found no ships, so that we shall be obliged to go in search of them.' They had sailed in the direction of the Isle of Wight. By the advice of Cornelius de Witt, who addressed the most earnest exhortations to the crews, the Council of War determined to follow them closely, but learned almost immediately that they had effected a junction with the French fleet at Portsmouth, and had thus avoided an attack which would have had disastrous consequences.

Though disappointed once more in his expectations, the Grand Pensionary did not despair of overcoming the bad fortune which deprived him of the success he vainly hoped for. He hastened to write to his brother, in two letters dated the same day, to inform him that according to information furnished by the ambassador, Boreel, who had not yet quitted

England, several vessels belonging to the English fleet had remained in the Thames—one of them being the *Prince Royal* carrying 120 guns; and he urged him to make a bold attempt to destroy them. 'I consider it of the greatest importance,' he writes, 'to use all means for ravaging the English coast and seizing on the fort of Sheerness, as well as for destroying and burning the English ships which have hitherto been detained in the Thames. Our lighter frigates might then sail up the river and devastate the country, so as to cause consternation in the defenceless capital, and to incite the malcontents in London to rise, which might succeed, if God by His divine grace will bring about a favourable turn in affairs.' 'You and M. de Ruyter,' he adds in conclusion, 'are best able to judge what may be necessary under the circumstances; in any case, I hope no time will be lost in setting to work, and that we may learn at any moment that a bold stroke has succeeded.'

The Council of War immediately took this scheme into consideration. The Grand Pensionary had caused them to be invested with full powers for the direction of the fleet, in the hope that the authority of his brother, as plenipotentiary of the States-General, might at last insure the execution of his bold designs. But the greater part of the English fleet having quitted the Thames, and being in a position to close the mouth of the river if that of the United Provinces ventured into it, the danger of the expedition outweighed its utility.

Cornelius de Witt did not, however, think himself justified in neglecting the urgent advice given to him. Before receiving his brother's last letter, which crossed his own, and in which John de Witt was forced to acknowledge 'that the junction of the allied fleets altered the measures which should be taken,' he insisted upon the Council of War allowing the expedition into the Thames to be attempted, whatever might be its risks. At the same time, in order to avert the apprehended danger, he caused the approaches to the river to be guarded by the fleet, while a squadron was sent to sail up it, May 24, 1672. This squadron, composed of fifteen of the lightest vessels, of eight frigates, and a few fire-ships, was entrusted to Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent, who during the last war between

the United Provinces and England had led the expedition against the fort of Chatham and destroyed the English fleet. His name seemed a pledge of victory. Cornelius de Witt was eager to accompany him, but Ruyter retained him on board his ship for fear of being obliged to engage in battle if the enemy's fleet drew near.

Van Ghent, confident that his return could not be cut off, set sail full of hope, trusting to come up with the seven English ships which had shown themselves in the mouth of the Thames. He followed them as far as the fort of Sheerness, under the shelter of which they withdrew, without his being able to force them either to come to an action or to retreat farther. He had not at his disposal a sufficient force to attack and reduce the fort, and not daring to continue his advance at the risk of finding his retreat cut off, he unwillingly determined to return. The ships which he had pursued were at any rate separated from the English fleet, and could not rejoin it; but, apart from this advantage, the last offensive operation on which John de Witt had obstinately built his hopes had once more brought upon him irretrievable disappointment.

It was the States of Zeeland which, out of enmity for Holland, had caused the plan of campaign of the Grand Pensionary to fail at sea as well as on land. They were not satisfied with putting obstacles in the way of sending the assistance demanded by the States of Holland on behalf of the town of Cologne, which might have prevented the King of France from obtaining access to the United Provinces. By delaying the departure of the squadron of Zeeland, they had also prevented the King of England from being attacked by the fleet of the republic in his own country, and had thus caused the loss of the opportunity for a victory by means of which the States-General might have remained masters of the sea, and obliged the two Kings to make peace.

'It is most deplorable,' writes Cornelius de Witt to the States-General, 'that in consequence of the delay of the Zeeland ships, contrary to the orders of their High Mightinesses, our enemies should have been given an opportunity of uniting their forces.' The Grand Pensionary, who never

swerved from the most scrupulous caution, blamed his brother for having thus publicly reproached one of the confederate States, instead of confining himself to confidential communications. He himself, however, complained of this inexcusable conduct in a private letter to the Prince of Orange. 'It is unfortunate,' he says, 'that our fleet was not able to overtake the English fleet before its junction with the French, which the weather and the wind would have permitted, according to human calculations, if the Zealand vessels, in compliance with the reiterated orders of their High Mightinesses, had put to sea and joined more speedily the bulk of the fleet. There will now be, as far as can be foreseen, a dangerous and difficult battle; but God the Lord who governs all knows what is best for the State, and we must bow in obedience to His will.' Both brothers thus pointed out the rock against which had been shattered the projects for an offensive war whereby the republic might have been spared the disasters that threatened her. Neither had neglected any means of averting them, but none the less on them was to fall the weight of the mistakes which they had vainly sought to prevent or to repair.

The failure of the enterprises destined to hinder the aggression of their enemies obliged the States-General to stand on the defensive, but the insufficiency of their military resources and the extent of the frontiers which they had to protect were almost insurmountable obstacles to successful resistance.

The uncertainty of the plan of attack, which Louis XIV. kept an impenetrable secret so long as he had not commenced his war operations, put the United Provinces at his mercy. The ambassador of the republic in Paris, De Groot, had been forced to content himself with transmitting to his masters the various plans of campaign which he heard talked about, without being able to discover the one preferred by the King of France. 'Some say,' he writes, 'that the army of our enemies will go first to Maestricht; others, to the Rhine. Their chief design may very well be to occupy the line of the Yssel, take possession of Arnheim, and advance into the heart of the country.' He had thus early clearly foreseen the

course of events, but his latest communications raised fresh illusions in the mind of the Grand Pensionary, by leading him to hope that Louis XIV. would not go beyond 'warlike demonstrations.' 'The King,' writes De Groot before his departure from Paris, 'is said to have no intention of carrying on a lengthened war; he will summon the first fortresses which he comes across to surrender, attack them with his entire forces if they resist, and put their garrisons to the sword, thus obtaining by means of terror the submission of the rest.' It was only on the eve of the entry of the French army into the territory of the United Provinces, that serious information was given to De Witt of a project of invasion of Holland itself, causing him to fear the passage of the Rhine or the Yssel.

Believing that they had only to protect the fortified towns on the Rhine and the fortress of Maestricht against the attack that threatened them, the States-General had given all their attention to fortifying these places. They proposed to put them in a condition to sustain a siege, in the hope that by thus checking Louis's invasion they might complete their military preparations and give time for their allies to come to their assistance. It was therefore in the direction of the Spanish Netherlands and on the Rhine that they determined to establish their first line of defence.

As regarded the Netherlands, it seemed needless to provide for the security of those frontiers which Louis XIV. could not attack without declaring war on Spain and invading her provinces. But Spain was so fearful of exposing herself to the attacks of the King of France by siding with the republic, that she demanded from the States-General their armed protection on behalf of the Netherlands. They had therefore been obliged to place at her disposal on their frontiers five regiments, which they promised to increase to thirteen, and the command of which was given to Zuylestein, lieutenant-general of the infantry. Their fortresses in North Brabant were furnished with troops; Bois-le-Duc, Breda, and Bergen-op-Zoom were occupied by 2,500 men, reinforced by detachments of militia and citizens. The garrisons distributed amongst these towns were not, however, sufficient; the necessary supplies

were wanting, and only Bois-le-Duc could be made safe from attack by the aid of the burgher companies who worked on the ramparts.

Outside this line of fortified towns, covering the frontiers of the Netherlands, the republic had made Maestricht her arsenal. In spite of its isolated position and distance of fifty leagues from Bois-le-Duc, Maestricht was the key to the United Provinces on the south. It might even be used as an entrenched camp for the States-General to take the offensive against the King of France, if he should advance into their territory without taking possession of the town, and served also to guarantee the Netherlands against any fresh aggression. The States-General, therefore, in order to give Spain the security of which her alliance was to be the price, felt it incumbent on them to keep up a garrison in Maestricht exceeding the necessities of defence, and raised it to 8,400 men, reinforced by 1,000 Spanish cavalry. The command of the fortress was entrusted to the Rhyngrave, who had grown old in the service of the republic, and to whom by reason of his age the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, Count Monterey, would have preferred Major-General Wurtz. Two commissioners—Martin de Crommon, deputy of the States-General, and John Egmont van den Neuburg, deputy of the Council of State—had been appointed to assist him. Contrary to the allegations of Pellisson, who represents them as eager to withdraw at the approach of danger and prevented by the Rhyngrave, they declared themselves resolved to be buried in the town, sooner than yield it up. The Rhyngrave himself, to whom Beverningh by the advice of the Grand Pensionary had sent an encouraging message from the Prince of Orange, appeared disposed to defend the town to the last extremity.

The advanced posts of the United Provinces near the Rhine were: Orsoy, Rhyenberg, Wesel, and Emmerich, situated in the Duchy of Cleves and belonging to the Elector of Brandenburg. These fortresses, which commanded the course of the Rhine, would have required extensive repairs to enable them to offer prolonged resistance. The works intended for their defence had remained unfinished or were falling into

ruin; their guns were insufficient or ill-appointed, and they withdrew nearly 5,000 men from the active forces to no good purpose. In order to profit by this advanced line of defence it would have been necessary, according to the advice of the Prince of Orange, to unite all the military forces within one fortress, and Wesel appeared the most advantageous for such a concentration of troops. Moreover, if the Rhine was to form their basis of resistance, the army of operation should have been sent to the banks of that river between Rhyenberg and Wesel; it might thus have protected the fortresses and obliged the enemy to retire upon Maestricht. This was the plan which Colonel Bampffield had communicated to the States-General, and which had been known in France long before. But, on the one hand, the just fear of removing the army from the frontier at the risk of making a retreat disastrous—on the other, the necessity for keeping a watch over the threatening movements of the Bishop of Münster in the province of Overijssel, prevented this plan from being carried out; and the fortresses of the Rhine were left to provide for their own defence without any hope of being relieved.

It was, therefore, on the territory of the United Provinces that the army was to await the enemy, while occupying the position of the Yssel. This line of defence was strongly supported at its two extremities. At one end it covered the fortresses which defended Overijssel, and was connected with those of Friesland and Groningen in the north by means of a narrow causeway along the Zuyder Zee, which might easily be made inaccessible to the enemy by inundation. At the other extremity it extended along the Rhine to the valley of the Wahal, which being defended by the fort of Schenck, supposed to be impregnable, and by the town of Nimeguen, occupied by a garrison of 2,500 men, would prevent any access to the United Provinces from the south. The line of the Yssel might, therefore, be considered as the principal barrier against invasion, but it would not suffice to insure the security of the United Provinces. If it should be forced, they would be left completely unprotected, unless it was supported by a second

line near enough to arrest the enemy's progress and to save Holland at least from the danger of invasion.

The Grand Pensionary had not awaited the rupture with France before completing this work of defence. The publication of Delacourt, entitled 'Maxims and Reflections,' of which John de Witt himself had written two chapters and inspired others, recommended, so far back as the year 1668, the establishment of a fortified line to be carried in front of Utrecht and called the line of the Grebbe. No steps having been taken at that period, fresh proposals had been submitted to the States of Holland when the danger became imminent. Negotiations were entered into with the States of Utrecht for fortifying the town of Utrecht and that of Naarden near Amsterdam; and for joining them by a line of defence along the valley of the Vecht. 'Your reflections upon the entrenchments of the Vecht and the fortifications of Utrecht have been much appreciated,' writes John de Witt to his brother, who in his capacity as deputy to the camp was actively employed in carrying out this project.

Conferences were held, but to no purpose. The States of Utrecht could not be induced to consent to bear any part of the cost of the fortifications of Naarden. The Grand Pensionary, convinced of the necessity for coming to some conclusion without further delay, tried to bring about an agreement by offering to rest satisfied with the execution of a scheme for inundating the neighbouring country. The report of the engineers, proving that the expenses would exceed the estimate, furnished a fresh pretext for the objections of the deputies of Utrecht, and all the works were once more adjourned. 'For years,' writes De Witt to Beverningh, 'I have been urging forethought for the security of Holland in particular, without wishing thereby to strike any blow at the defence of the State in general. It is not unknown to you that the fortifications of Naarden were commenced with that view; but in consequence of foolish rivalries the enterprise has been once more overthrown.' The Grand Pensionary's plans of defence could not therefore be put into execution, and had unfortunately the same fate as his schemes

for an offensive war; but they will suffice nevertheless to exonerate him from blame.

The line of the Yssel, which extended from the Zuyder Zee to the Rhine, remained, therefore, the only one that could be relied on as a basis for resistance. The river not being sufficiently deep to form a barrier against invasion, it was necessary to throw up entrenchments at certain points, and to supplement these by inundations in other parts. Prince John Maurice of Nassau had been charged with the construction of the works of fortification. He carried them on with indefatigable activity, and by the end of April the most important works were completed, at a cost of 35,000 florins; but they stopped at the junction of the Yssel and the Rhine, the left bank of the latter being left very imperfectly defended. The inundations did not at first produce the effect that might have been expected, in spite of the steps taken by the Prince of Orange for opening the sluices, which, wrote the deputies to the camp, 'were to protect the country, by inundating it, better than 6,000 men could have done.' The negligence of the commandant of Doesburg allowed the water to escape where it ought to have been kept in, thereby rendering several parts of the river fordable. 'The shore is widening in front of our entrenchments,' writes Beverningh to the Grand Pensionary, with increasing anxiety; 'it is becoming accessible everywhere, and will form a very easy passage for the enemy.'

It was indispensable, therefore, that all the available troops should be employed to guard the Yssel instead of being concentrated on the positions which seemed to be most threatened. In order to protect this line of defence along its entire length, extending over a space of sixteen or twenty leagues, it would have been necessary, according to Wicquefort, to employ an army of 100,000, or at least of 60,000, men, amply provided with all war material. The troops at the disposal of the Prince of Orange were far from reaching this number, and the inadequacy of their equipment increased their weakness. 'What has distressed me above all,' writes De Witt to the Prince of Orange, 'is to learn that the army of the Yssel has been so long without gunpowder, and that at this very

moment it is in want of gun-carriages. I implore your Highness to let me know in what state matters are, and what I can do to supply you as well as the army with all you require.' Beverningh replied: 'I hope that for the present we shall have enough gunpowder. As for gun-carriages, I am afraid that there is just now no remedy; in a fortnight's time we shall have barely seven. I am having six got ready now.' The artillery was thus dismantled and made to some extent useless.

The preparations for defence were still further hindered by the small number of troops to which the army in the field was reduced. The occupation of Maestricht employed 7,500 men; a contingent of five regiments, consisting of about 5,000 men, was placed at the disposal of the Governor-General of the Netherlands in the district of Bergen-op-Zoom; 3,500 men had been despatched to other places in North Brabant; and finally to the garrisons in the fortresses of the Rhine and of Nimeguen, numbering 7,500 men, must be added those of Friesland and Groningen, which consisted of not less than 4,000, and those of Overijssel, consisting of about 1,300.

This distribution of troops employed as many as 30,000 men. The division available for the defence of the Yssel, although it had been increased by fresh reinforcements, did not exceed therefore 22,000 men—14,400 infantry, and 7,600 cavalry. Instead of having this division under his hand, the Prince of Orange was obliged to divide it still further into different detachments drawn up in *échelons* along the river. They were too distant from one another to be quickly concentrated in case of necessity, and at most of the posts were too weak to hold out without assistance. The Prince of Orange, therefore, writes to Beverningh: 'I am in great distress, learning the approach of the enemy, and having only insufficient forces to oppose to him. The only means of safety is to send all the available forces to the Yssel. You must write to the Hague without an hour's delay, to beg that as many soldiers as possible may be sent from Maestricht, Bois-le-Duc, Breda, Bergen-op-Zoom, and the strong places in Flanders. I think also that the few horse and foot which

may still be in Holland should be sent here. Otherwise I see no prospect of being able to prevent the enemy crossing the Yssel.' The Prince of Orange could not, indeed, fail to perceive the difficulty of his task. Out of an available force of 52,000 men, he had at present only 22,000 at his disposal, while the King of France could bring together 90,000 for the attack.

The Grand Pensionary of Holland had never ceased demanding that fresh reinforcements should be sent more quickly and in greater numbers to join the army, and he complained constantly of the delays in recruiting. He pointed out, moreover, the necessity for sending to the camp twenty-eight regiments of infantry, instead of being satisfied with sixteen, in order that the army in the field should consist of 28,500 foot, and should amount with the cavalry to thirty-five or thirty-six thousand men. Convinced that it was too weak to repel the invasion if it continued to be divided into detachments, he proposed to unite it into one single body, which should advance to meet the enemy. As soon as the danger appeared to be removed from the Low Countries, he declared that all the available troops ought to be sent to the Yssel, and proposed that they should be supported by armed boats, which would protect the course of the Yssel and of the Rhine. He had already sent two fresh regiments to the camp, besides some companies withdrawn from the garrisons of Breda and Gornichem, to which he added some militia troops belonging to Utrecht, and seventeen armed companies of peasants, representing about four thousand men.

He had spared no pains in order that more considerable military forces should be speedily placed at the disposal of the Prince of Orange. In compliance with his request, the States of Holland determined to send him fifteen companies of their provincial militia, to the number of 1,800 men. The Grand Pensionary had besides turned his mind for some time past to the subject of the recall of the five regiments which had been despatched to the frontiers of the Netherlands to protect the Spanish provinces against an attack on the part of the King of France. He had not awaited the declaration of war before demanding their return. So far back as the month of

March, he declared to his brother Cornelius, who had been sent to Brussels on a mission to the Governor-General of the Netherlands, how much he regretted the disposal of that body of troops. 'I may add,' he writes, 'that if I facilitated this arrangement to please Count Monterey, it was contrary to my own judgment, and because I felt convinced that you had already committed yourself to some extent with him; for, as matters stand now, I should have refused to send any assistance till further notice, as our plans may fail or be impossible to carry out, from want of a considerable number of troops, who are engaged without any necessity, and, in my opinion, without any prospect of an attack at that point, contrary to the interests of the State.' De Witt did not consider the despatch of 3,000 Spanish horse promised by Count Monterey sufficient compensation for this engagement. On the eve of the declaration of war, therefore, he caused a resolution to be forwarded to his brother, in which the States of Holland urged the necessity for using the whole of their military forces in the defence of the territory of the republic. Cornelius de Witt repaired to the Hague to obtain a respite to this order of recall, and thus to prevent Count Monterey, thinking himself abandoned and unable to defend the Low Countries, from treating with the King of France.

Fresh efforts, encouraged by the Grand Pensionary and supported by the Prince of Orange and by Van Beuningen, who had succeeded Cornelius de Witt at Brussels, brought about a change in the dispositions of the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands. In order to testify his good-will to the States, he despatched 1,000 horse to Maestricht, followed by a body of cavalry of 1,650 men, under the command of his two ablest lieutenants, the Marquis de Louvignies and De Villeneuve, declaring himself ready to pawn his jewels in order to provide for their pay. He consented also to the departure of the troops placed at his disposal by the Spanish Government, which the republic could no longer dispense with, requiring them for purposes of defence. As the danger drew nearer, the States sent orders to the five regiments they were withdrawing from the Netherlands to march day and

night, so as to rejoin the army and bring a tardy reinforcement to the detachments detailed for the defence of the Yssel. Two only could be formed into line before the retreat of the army; the three others and the Spanish cavalry, forming a reserve of about 4,500 men, joined the Prince of Orange when he fell back upon Holland, without having had an opportunity of being opposed to the first shock of the enemy.

The Grand Pensionary would have liked to do even more. The garrison of Maestricht appeared to him capable of reduction without any danger to the safety of the place. He was desirous, therefore, of replacing a portion of the troops that were assembled there, by some of the citizens and by some regiments of Spanish infantry which he urgently demanded of Count Monterey. He proposed to augment thus, by a fresh reinforcement of 5,000 men, the contingent of regiments withdrawn from the Netherlands, and to raise to at least 36,000 the force assembled under the command of the Prince of Orange. The uncertainty as to Louis's plan of attack was the cause of fresh delay before any decision could be come to, and when orders to march were at length given to some of the regiments of the garrison of Maestricht, the advance of the French army had already intercepted their route. The Prince of Orange was therefore reduced, even after he had received a portion of the reinforcements sent to the army, to commence the campaign with not more than twenty-five or twenty-six thousand men.

In order to increase the chances of resistance by the augmentation of their available troops, it would have been necessary for the States-General to gain time, and De Witt had reckoned on the prolonged siege of their frontier fortresses for arresting the advance of the enemy. The suddenness of the attack, which disappointed their expectations, prevented them from completing their defensive measures, and the weakness of their main body of troops, inadequately reinforced, opened the way to invasion.

Early in the month of May, Louis XIV., who had hastened his departure from Paris, 'to avoid the sadness of farewells' according to Madame de Sévigné, rejoined his army at Charleroi and gave the signal for opening the campaign, of

which he had directed the preparations with equal forethought and precision. He was accompanied by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Pomponne, and by Louvois, who had just been appointed Minister of State. A hundred and ten thousand men, forming the finest and most numerous army which had ever been seen in Europe, were ready to march. 'There is no longer any person of quality remaining in Paris,' writes Madame de Sévigné; 'if a man is seen in the street with a sword, the little children cry out at him.' It was no longer a question of a military promenade similar to those which five years before had taken place when the French troops entered the Spanish Netherlands. The baggage of the officers and of the court had been strictly limited. A serious expedition was preparing.

The military forces which the King of France had at his disposal seemed to make all resistance useless. While the Duke of Luxemburg was told off to the command of the auxiliary troops, who to the number of about six thousand reinforced those of the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne, the army commanded by the King was divided into two bodies, according to a plan of campaign decided upon the previous year. One, of 30,000 men, which was to serve as an advanced guard, had been mustered at Sedan, and placed under the orders of the Prince of Condé; the other, concentrated at Charleroi, and numbering 80,000 men, was commanded by Viscount Turenne, who was to be nominally under the orders of the King's brother, the Duke of Orleans. In the absence of the three marshals, Bellefonds, De Créqui, and D'Humières, who, at the risk of incurring the royal displeasure, had refused to serve under him, claiming to be his equals, Turenne had as his lieutenant-generals, Count de Soissons, colonel-general of the Swiss Guard, the Duke de Roannois, the Duke de Lude, master-general of ordnance, the Duke de la Feuillade, Count de Lorge, the Marquis de Rochefort, and Gadagne. The Chevalier de Lorraine, the sorry favourite of the Duke of Orleans, Martinet, lieutenant-colonel of the King's regiment, the reformer of the French infantry, Montal, Genlis, and Vitry acted as major-generals. The Marquis de Rana was colonel-general of

dragoons, and the Chevalier de Fourelle quartermaster-general of the light cavalry, which he had been commissioned to reorganise. The staff of the Prince of Condé comprised as lieutenant-generals, Count d'Estrades and Count de Guiche, whom a long residence in the United Provinces had made perfectly acquainted with the country, Saint Abre, and Foucault; and as major-generals, Count du Plessis Praslin, Count Nogent, Magalotti, and the Marquis de Choiseul. These were the flower of the French nobility; they did honour to their country.

Though unable without provoking Spain to make his way across the Netherlands, which would have been his shortest and easiest route, Louis XIV. found himself obliged nevertheless to enter a part of that country. He therefore requested Count Monterey's permission to pass through, to which the latter, not daring to refuse him, replied that he must refer the matter to the Spanish court. The King of France, without waiting for the answer, advanced along the Sambre, making two halts on Spanish territory. When Count Monterey sent to remonstrate with him, he had already encamped in the bishopric of Liège, which belonged to the Elector of Cologne, who left it entirely at his disposal for the entry of his troops. Leaving behind him, between Ath and Cambrai, a corps of observation under the command of Nancre, he descended the left bank of the Meuse, while the Prince of Condé, who had quitted Sedan, was advancing along the right bank.

No definitive resolution had yet been come to regarding the plan of attack. Louis XIV. awaited the junction of his two main bodies of troops, which he had appointed to meet him at Viset, before assembling his Council of War, which had to decide between two opinions, those of Condé and Turenne. Condé was in favour of laying siege to Maestricht, of which he expected speedily to obtain possession. Turenne, more cautious, was opposed to this, fearing that the siege might delay too long the march of the army. In taking possession of Maestricht, Louis would have followed the more prudent course. Not only would the possession of that fortress insure a basis of operations, but it would also threaten the Netherlands and

prevent Spain from cutting off the retreat of the French army in case of a reverse; it seemed thus to put into the King's hands the key to the Spanish possessions and to the United Provinces. But the town was too well fortified, and protected by too numerous a garrison, to allow of its being carried by storm. If the army delayed its march for the purpose of besieging it, the States-General would have time to increase their forces and to complete their preparations for defence. Moreover, although the line of attack closed by Maestricht was the most direct and the shortest, it led up to the Wahal, which must be crossed in order to advance directly into Guelders and Holland; and the Wahal, protected by the width of its stream as well as by the importance of the fortresses which commanded the passage, offered a serious obstacle to invasion. Access to the territory of the United Provinces would therefore be more easily obtained by directing the attack upon some other point.

In accordance with the advice of Louvois, it was determined to give up any attempt at seizing Maestricht. In order, however, to hold in check the strong garrison of that place and to prevent it from making any offensive movement, Turenne proposed that the troops should occupy the neighbouring small towns of Maseyck and Tongres, above and below Maestricht, which were within the bishopric of Liège. The chapter made a vain attempt at resistance and refused to give them up, urging the neutrality of the episcopal territory; but the King of France, by a rapid investment, secured their possession, to which the Elector secretly assented. The fortifications of Maseyck were restored, and, as a measure of precaution, a rear-guard of 6,000 foot and 4,000 horse was left in the bishopric of Liège, under the command of Chamilly. The garrison of Maestricht was thus rendered useless for the defence of the United Provinces, and the hostile army retained at the same time possession of the Meuse, by which in case of a retreat it would preserve its communications with France. Louis XIV. might now commence with safety a campaign of invasion.

After a fortnight's delay, he ordered his troops to move in

a different direction from that which they had hitherto followed. He withdrew from the Meuse and approached the Rhine. Confident of finding in the States of the Elector of Cologne the assistance he had skilfully secured for himself, he encamped below Cologne, at Neuss, where his magazines had been amply provisioned, and proceeded along the left bank with Turenne, while Condé received orders to move to the right bank. The French army arrived without interference in the neighbourhood of the strong places occupied by the garrisons of the States-General on the banks of the Rhine, which were the advanced posts of the United Provinces. In accordance with the suggestion made the previous year to Louvois by the Duke of Luxemburg, the order was given to attack them simultaneously. On the same day Louis, with the Duke of Orleans and Turenne on the left bank, and Condé on the right bank, laid siege to Orsoy, Rhynberg, Burick, and Wesel, 'which the Dutch, unless they were the most wretched people in the world, should have been ready to defend.' 'I thought it more advantageous for my plans and less commonplace as regards glory,' writes Louis XIV. to Colbert, 'to attack at the same time four places on the Rhine, and to command in person at all the four sieges. I hope no one will complain that I have disappointed public expectation.'

The fortresses which during the war of independence had arrested the progress of the greatest soldiers of Spain, Farnese and Spinola, yielded without resistance to the King of France. The first of the four fortresses to be attacked was Orsoy, which, invested on June 2, 1672, surrendered the following day. It was defended by a garrison of 800 men commanded by an officer named Mulard, and offered no resistance. 'The ditches having no water, the garrison did not even venture to await the attack, though the place was protected by five bastions. The governor contented himself with causing a few guns to be fired, which killed some officers and volunteers of the besieging army, and as soon as the trench was prepared, under cover of two false attacks made during the night, he opened the gates without waiting for a shot. The garrison were none the less treated as prisoners of war, and

were not even allowed the protection of the law of nations. Seven French soldiers who were amongst them, and had been refused leave to depart when recalled by the King of France, were barbarously hung; the officers and soldiers of the States-General had to submit to ill-treatment from which even their wives were not spared by the enemy. This was a foretaste of the cruelties and severities which conquest was about to bring upon the United Provinces.

Rhynberg followed the example of Orsoy, and, although capable of defending itself, showed equal submission to Louis XIV. The besiegers restricted themselves to an engagement of outposts between some of the French cavalry and some infantry belonging to the garrison which had been sent out to reconnoitre. The surrender was hastened by treachery: Baron Daniel d'Osory, an Irishman by birth, colonel of cavalry, commanded the fortress under the orders of the nominal governor, Van Bassen, who had succeeded Poleman, an energetic officer whom the Prince of Orange had recalled to the camp. Gained over to the cause of the King of France by a member of his family, D'Osory had kept up private communications with the hostile army, and began by entering into a treaty for a capitulation, in order to afford a pretext for admitting the French envoys, who were thus enabled to reconnoitre the condition of the fortress. After parleying for some days, he formally received into the town the Duke de Duras, who promised him in the King's name to allow the garrison to withdraw with arms and baggage if the town were given up to him. The Council of War having assembled, the governor, supported by two brave officers, Captain Toulemonde and Ensign Winck, vehemently opposed the capitulation, and suggested that the outer works should be blown up; but D'Osory had gained over all the other officers, and the town surrendered without a single musket shot having been fired. The armed frigates which might have aided the resistance of the town were stopped by the French artillery, abandoned by their crews, and captured from the shore. The garrison, numbering 1,500 men, were sent with arms and baggage back to Maestricht, and D'Osory had the audacity to accompany

them, thus exposing himself to the punishment due to his crime, for which he paid with his life. A French regiment replaced the garrison of the town, and the Catholic worship was solemnly restored.

Two days previously, Burick had also been occupied by the French army. The governor of the fortress, Heeckeren, Lord of Peckendam, at any rate did his duty, in spite of the dilapidation of the ramparts, which were only provided with ten guns, and the inadequacy of the garrison, numbering only 400 men. Without allowing himself to be intimidated, he exhorted the officers to sacrifice their lives, and spared neither promises nor threats to obtain the armed co-operation of the citizens. Determined to use every means to preserve the fortress for the States, he attempted to mislead the enemy with regard to the limited number of defenders at his disposal by causing a large number of lighted matches to be conveyed to the walls, which might make it appear as if the garrison amounted to 1,600 men. Turenne, informed by deserters of this subterfuge, and not wishing to prolong a siege which in the space of two days had cost him 600 men, pushed forward the attack. The Council of War, perceiving that they could not repel the assault, determined to ask for a capitulation. Turenne referred the matter to the King, and before receiving his orders demanded that one of the gates should be handed over to the regiment of French Guards. He complimented the governor at the same time on the energy of his resistance; but Louis XIV. gave the latter no credit for his courageous behaviour, and sent word that he expected the garrison to surrender as prisoners of war.

The following day, Wesel, situated on the other bank of the Rhine, the key to the United Provinces on the east, fell into the hands of the Prince of Condé. The treachery of the officers and the cowardice of the inhabitants made him master of it, the garrison, consisting of not less than 1,500 men, having made no effort to defend themselves. The governor, Martin van Zucchem, who had served under the Stadtholder Maurice of Nassau, and who forty-three years before had assisted in putting the States-General in possession

of the town, had been detained at the Hague, where his powers were distrusted on account of his great age. He had been succeeded by an inexperienced officer, Van Santem, 'who,' writes Wicquefort, 'had forgotten the duties of a captain, which he had exercised for a considerable time, without having learnt those of a colonel, which he was now called upon to fulfil.' After an attack lasting two days, he allowed the fort of La Lippe, which protected the town and might have checked the enemy for a considerable time, to be surprised during the night by the regiment of Auvergne. The frigate intended to assist in its defence withdrew, as if the fate of the place were now quite hopeless, and at break of day the inhabitants of Wesel saw with stupefaction the flag of the King of France floating on the ramparts. They immediately began to lay down the arms they had taken up for the purpose of aiding the garrison, and the ladies of the town implored of the Prince of Condé the favour of being allowed to leave it. The Prince replied 'that he could not deprive himself of what was the fairest part of his triumph.' The officers, whom he had previously gained over, took advantage of this reply to lead the inhabitants to fear the vengeance of the enemy.

Intimidated by threats the burgomasters took the initiative, and repaired to the camp of the Prince of Condé, while the officer charged with the defence of the advanced posts, Major Copes, withdrew into the town the detachment under his command, forbidding it to fire on the enemy. The Prince of Condé took advantage of this retreat to order his troops to advance, and gave directions for cutting through the dyke that kept in the water of the ditches. The town was thus given up to him without defence, and the keys were sent to him. All attempt at resistance being now useless, the governor consented to a capitulation, by the terms of which the garrison were to remain prisoners for a period of six weeks, after which they were to be admitted to ransom; they were disarmed and shut up in the church, while the former French ambassador to the States-General, Count d'Estrades, took over the command of the place in the King's name. Van

Santem left the town with seven captains for whose liberty he had stipulated; but the Prince of Orange had them arrested as traitors, and gave orders for proceedings to be taken against them, that the commandants might be brought to a sense of their duty, which they seemed to vie with each other in forgetting.

Louis XIV. having taken possession of these four towns, of which not one had cost him a siege, now found himself master of both banks of the Rhine. By means of a bridge of boats, he assembled all his troops on the right bank in order not to be stopped by the Wahal, which is the widest branch of the Rhine, and which he would have had to cross if he had gone over to the left bank. He then continued his march along the river, in order to find an easier crossing farther down. Two places only might still arrest his progress, Rees and Emmerich. Emmerich was evacuated at Condé's approach, on the demand made to the States by the Elector of Brandenburg, who claimed neutrality for that town, in which the archives of the duchy of Cleves were shut up. Rees, about to be besieged by Turenne, who had been joined by Condé, had formerly been one of the most renowned fortresses of the United Provinces. Lieutenant-Colonel Winbergen, a member of the nobility of Guelders, who was its governor, had only a garrison of 400 men under his command, but he was determined to let himself be buried beneath the ruins of the fortress sooner than surrender. The cowardice of one of his captains, Van der Hoeve, who abandoned the fort on which depended the preservation of the town, placed it at the mercy of the besieging army. Winbergen, however, refused to sign the capitulation Louvois wished to impose upon him, and which he considered humiliating. But he was coerced by the inhabitants, and obliged to consent to leave the garrison prisoners, only stipulating that they should be neither plundered nor ill-treated.

Nine days had sufficed to deprive the United Provinces of all the advanced posts that closed the entrance to their frontiers on the east. 'It is impossible to see without astonishment,' writes Condé with noble simplicity, 'such great

and happy successes in so short a time.' The loss of these isolated towns did not yet, it is true, affect the territory of the republic; but the almost overwhelming rapidity of these conquests revealed the irremediable weakness of the defence. It inspired the French army with a confidence that added still further chances of victory to its irresistible advance. Condé, who when in Paris had appeared anxious as to the result of the invasion, now went so far as to bet 100,000 pistoles that he would cross the Yssel without the loss of a hundred men. 'You will see that the King is so completely fortunate,' writes Madame de Sévigné, 'that he will only have to state what he wishes in Europe, without taking the trouble to go himself at the head of his army. People will be too happy to give it to him. I assure you he will cross the Yssel as if it were the Seine. The joy of the courtiers is a good sign. Terror prepares the way everywhere for a ready submission.'

In fact, a weakness that was becoming contagious was showing itself in all parts of the United Provinces. The deputies sent to the camp declared 'that the present state of affairs would appear less formidable to them if it were not for the want of courage which they could not remedy.' 'On learning the approach of the enemy,' writes Beverningh to De Witt, 'the militia officers are seized with such a panic of terror, that I myself am alarmed, when I think what may be expected from them.' 'As for the peasants,' add the deputies to the camp, 'they point out that their month's engagement has expired, and demand to be dismissed, which would save the cost of their keep.' 'It is impossible,' writes Beverningh again, on learning the successes of the French army, 'to describe or make anyone understand what discouragement and confusion exist in the towns amongst the magistrates and inhabitants. I know that I have had the reputation in Holland of representing matters too unfavourably. God grant it may be true, and that I may be a false prophet! But I consider it ridiculous folly not to see and recognise danger out of a spirit of bravado.' De Witt, though less accessible to alarm than anyone else, could not refrain from

saying, on hearing of the loss of Wesel, 'Half the republic is lost.'

The Prince of Orange himself was not proof against discouragement. 'I fear, indeed,' writes Beverningh, 'that if he is not supported, he will be reduced to some extremity.' The extremity which Beverningh foresaw was the abandonment of the line of the Yssel. The Prince of Orange had hitherto energetically opposed this. He writes to De Witt, 'The greatest disaster which could happen to the State would be the passage of the Yssel by the enemy,' and some days later he repeats the same declaration to Beverningh in equally forcible terms. He changed his mind as soon as the Rhine fortresses were besieged by the King of France. Without waiting to receive the news of their capitulation, he assembled a council of war to decide whether he should give up the defence of the river. The general officers, with the exception of Count Hornes, voted for abandoning the position; they pleaded the inadequacy of their forces, the extent of the line of defence, and the dangers of the retreat in case a passage was forced by the enemy. The deputies to the camp who were present with the army decided that no resolution ought to be taken till the matter had been referred to the members of the military commission of the States-General. They summoned the latter to Arnheim, where the Prince of Orange and Beverningh repaired to hear their opinion.

The Grand Pensionary was not satisfied with the instructions which the States had transmitted to their commissioners. Alarmed at the dispositions shown by the general officers, he wrote directly to Beverningh, urging upon him that he should combat their opinion, and not allow the plan of campaign to be altered. 'I calculate,' he writes, 'that you must have, with the last reinforcements sent to you, about 30,000 foot and horse,' including thus all the troops which had been despatched to the camp, and of which 4,500 had not yet joined the army of operation. 'Considering also the justice of our cause,' he continues, 'we may be encouraged in resolution and firmness, and may await with confidence the help of Almighty God. I venture, therefore, to hope that,

if the superior officers again offer pusillanimous advice and opinions, you will reject them without hesitation, and with marks of serious displeasure. You must not allow the proposal of abandoning the Yssel to penetrate into the camp to the subaltern officers and men; for, in my opinion, it would be more likely to weaken the army by demoralising it, than the important reliefs which you have already received and those which you will receive could strengthen it. I can assure you that the States of Holland are unanimously of opinion that the enemy must be awaited in front of the river, and stopped there by force. Such has long been the opinion of the States-General and of the States of all the provinces, and the expectation of all good citizens, as you will learn from the deputies who are starting for Arnheim.' The Grand Pensionary sums up thus the programme of defence in his report to the States: 'It is decided that we remain on the Yssel to live or die there.' The resolution of holding out there till the last extremity was therefore adopted without difficulty, and the commissioners of the States conveyed these instructions to the deputies at the camp, who, as well as the Prince of Orange, acquiesced in them.

The States-General approved the resolution of their commissioners, and informed the Prince of Orange of their determination to retain the line of the Yssel. Still, forced to take into consideration the disastrous events which were being hurried on, they would not restrain his freedom of action in case a retreat should appear to him necessary in consequence of the change of circumstances. They therefore authorised him to take, in case of necessity, and with the sanction of the deputies to the camp, any measures that might be called for by the progress of the enemy. De Witt, whose previous confidence was shaken by the surrender of the Rhine fortresses, had at length perceived that it might be necessary to recall the troops, in order to avert greater calamities. 'In the event of Almighty God continuing to try us, by allowing misfortune to approach us more nearly,' he writes to Beverningh, 'I could not do otherwise than think with you that the camp must be broken up.'

The army of the States-General was on the point of being reduced to this extremity by the forward march which the King of France had boldly hurried on with a success as complete as it was rapid. Having made himself master of all the Rhine fortresses that defended the two banks of the river, Louis XIV. had the choice of which direction he would take to advance into the enemy's country, by crossing one or the other arm of the river. Since quitting Maestricht, he had given up the idea of forcing his way across the Wahal, and could only pursue his conquests by deciding to cross either the Yssel, or that portion of the river that still retains the name of the Rhine, but lower down is called the Leek. He would thus open a way for himself either into Weluwe or Betuwe, which may be called the approaches to Holland.

By advancing towards the Yssel, where the Prince of Orange had concentrated his principal forces, Louis might overwhelm the hostile army by superior numbers, and meet no further resistance in his way. On the other hand, by advancing towards the Rhine he would find a river easier to cross than the Yssel, and less strongly defended; while, if he succeeded in effecting a passage, he would be established in the centre of the United Provinces, and might, if he pleased, take in the rear the fortresses of the Wahal before penetrating into the enemy's country, or hasten his forward march in order to cut off the retreat of the Prince of Orange's army. It was towards the Rhine, therefore, that Louis XIV. advanced; but he took care at the same time to threaten the Yssel by the despatch of a detachment, which, under the command of Count de Roys, approached Westerford, where the Prince of Orange had established his head-quarters. He thus disconcerted the plan of defence by concealing his real designs up to the last moment.

The States-General were still ignorant of the direction he intended to take. Since the French army had quitted Maestricht the most contradictory information had been given them. While the secretary of their embassy, Rompf, who had remained in Paris in spite of the war, told them,

at the very outset of the campaign, that the passage of the Rhine below the Wahal ought to be fortified, De Witt was persuaded that all the force of the attack would be concentrated on the Wahal against Nimeguen. The Rhyngrave, on the contrary, who was Governor of Maestricht, announced that the King of France was advancing towards the Yssel.

Notwithstanding the urgent advice of the Grand Pensionary, no watch had been kept over the enemy's movements. 'I cannot conceal from you,' he writes to Beverningh, 'that great astonishment is felt here at so little being known in your camp, considering that the events are taking place in Cleves, of which country Major-General Prince John Maurice of Nassau is stadtholder, whose inhabitants, without being hostile to France, are devoted to the State, and where hundreds of soldiers serving in the camp are peasants belonging to the soil, so that they might be sent by dozens wherever they are most wanted, and employed, under pretext of discussing the ransom of the prisoners, to carry messages to the King of France and his generals, by which means everything might be promptly and correctly known.'

The Prince of Orange was awaiting the enemy on the Yssel. Not only did the Yssel appear to him to be threatened by the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne, who were approaching it on the north with their troops under the command of Luxembourg, but he also expected to have to defend himself there against the attack of the French army. The passage of the Rhine did not enter into his calculations. He did not think that Louis XIV. would venture to attempt it, finding it defended at its two extremities by the fortress of Schenck and the fortified town of Arnheim, which would threaten him with a twofold attack. He did not, therefore, pay sufficient attention to that position, and, while disposing his troops along the Yssel, he imprudently neglected the right wing of his line of defence.

He had despatched there two regiments of infantry and two of cavalry, making an effective force of 1,000 foot and 600 horse, with a contingent of 500 peasants. This detachment was placed under the command of Count Montbas,

brother-in-law of Peter de Groot, a Frenchman by birth, who had been for a long time in the employment of the States. The Grand Pensionary having recommended him to Van Beuningen, on the occasion of a visit paid by Montbas to Paris for private business, Van Beuningen describes him 'as a man of courage and good behaviour, who in these times should rather be brought forward than kept at a distance.' His family connection with the republican party had caused him to incur the suspicion of the Prince of Orange, in spite of the attentions which he had constantly paid to the young son of William II. during his early years, when the latter often spent the evenings at his house, where games of cards were the principal amusement. In consequence of their hostility, Montbas had not been able to obtain the post of lieutenant-general of cavalry, but had been obliged to content himself with that of commissary-general. Suspected by the new captain-general of having wished to remain at the Hague in order to keep up a communication with the deputies of the States who were hostile to the Prince, and cause still closer restrictions to be put on his military powers, he had received abrupt orders to return to the camp, and remained there several days without employment before receiving his new command.

In offering no obstacle to the selection made by the councillor deputies who sent Montbas to the Rhine, the Prince of Orange evidently intended only to allow him a post of observation; if it had been a question of entrusting to him the defence of the chief position, he would not have failed to oppose his appointment. Moreover, the troops placed under the orders of Montbas were inadequate to repulse the enemy, as they consisted of scarcely sixteen hundred men for guarding six or seven fordable places, along a line extending three or four leagues, from Heussen to Tolhuys. Beverningh, therefore, writes to the States of Holland, 'It is a great mistake to suppose that the three or four regiments which have been given to Montbas will prevent the French army from crossing into the island of Betuwe.' The instructions of the latter, moreover, left him uncertain as to the manner in which he

was to employ his troops. The orders of the deputies were 'that he should always keep his eye on the town of Nimeguen, and that as soon as he should see the French approaching by water or land, he should enter the town for the purpose of defending it.' The orders of the Prince of Orange, less urgent, enjoined him 'to throw himself into Nimeguen, when that place should be invested and actually attacked.'

Uncertain, therefore, whether he was to take the initiative in effecting his retreat, or to await the attack of the French army before throwing himself into Nimeguen, Montbas requested explanations from the Prince of Orange, but received no answer. He then addressed himself to the deputies. 'In God's name,' he writes, 'send me positive and explicit orders, and let me have them speedily.' The deputies answered, 'After receiving yours of to-day, we beg to inform you that the Prince has undertaken to give you more positive orders; but as he is encumbered with business of all sorts, we apprise you that his Highness's intentions are in conformity with your orders of yesterday; that you should not wait to be attacked in your quarters and forced to retreat, but that on perceiving the approach of the enemy, and that the town of Nimeguen is in danger of being invested or besieged, you should march immediately on that place in order to defend it, making use of the powers conferred on you.'

In order to carry out his instructions, therefore, Montbas was to hold back and reserve himself for the defence of Nimeguen. But he must have been the more embarrassed as to his course of action, as on the very day on which the deputies to the camp wrote him this letter, Major-General Wurtz, who was inspecting the lines of defence, had sent for him, to inform him of the intended despatch of five regiments, three of which would be infantry, with 500 Spanish horse. The following day, Montbas, not finding these reinforcements at the appointed meeting-place, and suspecting the Prince of Orange of wishing him to be crushed by superior numbers, thought himself authorised to commence his retreat, which he did with unfortunate precipitation, by moving his infantry towards Nimeguen. He announced this to the deputies to the

camp in these terms: 'I have ordered the infantry to retire, and I remain with the cavalry, regretting extremely that I am forced to quit this post, which is so important to the State; if the enemy does not still press me too hard, I will hold out for some days longer.'

The last letter he received from Wurtz put an end to any hesitation as to the line of conduct he should pursue. The latter, while informing him tardily, though without giving him any precise orders to remain at his post, that 'the Prince of Orange had given the command of Nimeguen to Welderen, lieutenant-general of cavalry, thus sparing him that trouble,' explains to him, on the other hand, that the fear of an attack on the Yssel, consequent upon a false alarm, had caused a delay in the despatch of the reinforcements promised to him. He announces, moreover, that they will be reduced to three regiments, of which only one will be infantry, and in a post-script written the following night he adds that 'after having despatched these regiments on their way, the Prince of Orange now finds it necessary to recall them.'

Disheartened by this desertion, Montbas gave up all idea of disputing the passage with the hostile army if any attempt were made to force it. So long as he believed he had only a feigned attack to repulse, he did his duty. A detachment of two squadrons accompanied by a hundred dragoons, commanded by Saint Abre, had appeared in the neighbourhood of the Rhine, near Tolhuys, on June 10, and had imprudently ventured to cross the river, at the risk of giving the alarm. Montbas immediately ordered Soutland, colonel of one of the two regiments of cavalry under his command, to repulse the attack, while he went in search of his rear-guard of infantry, which had not got very far away. On his return he met Soutland, who was retreating on the premature intelligence of the passage of the whole of the French cavalry; he brought him hurriedly back with him, and forced the advance guard of the enemy to recross the Rhine. But unable to doubt any longer that the whole French army was assembled near Elten, and too easily convinced of the futility of resistance, he sent an express to announce his retreat to the Prince of Orange.

While his troops were continuing their march towards Nimeguen, he halted for a night's rest at Arnheim and then went on to head-quarters at Dieren, where he was arrested by order of the Prince of Orange, who in accusing him of treason hoped to be relieved from the blame which he might himself have incurred.

It was not, however, Montbas' more or less culpable abandonment of his post opened to the enemy an entrance into the country. The Prince of Orange was able to repair in time the consequences of the misconduct of which he accused him. He sent off Major-General Wurtz in all haste with the two regiments of cavalry whose despatch he had notified to Montbas, augmented by six other detached companies, and ordered him to take under his command Soutland's regiment of cavalry, which had been left behind. He further reinforced the division by Aylva's regiment of infantry, which Montbas had sent back to Nimeguen, and which received orders to return immediately. Finally he joined to it some companies belonging to the regiments that had been recalled from the Spanish Netherlands. Montbas' detachment was thus in part sent back to its cantonments, and received fresh reinforcements which might easily have been augmented by the recall of the garrisons of Nimeguen and Arnheim, whose co-operation would have been of material assistance to the defence. Instead of the 1,600 men to which Montbas had been reduced, for opposing the enemy, Wurtz had at his disposal 2,000 or 2,500. But the haste with which they were sent, ignorance of the positions to be occupied, the neglect that had prevented any entrenchments being thrown up, and above all the want of artillery, made them of very little avail for a serious effort of resistance.

The French army had placed itself in a position to cross the Rhine by a rapid concentration behind the hill of Elten. Before proceeding to take the last instructions of the King, who had advanced as far as Rees, Condé had ascertained from the spies who furnished him information, what parts of the river were now fordable. One of these fords was near a small town named Heussen; the other was opposite Tolhuys. At

Tolhuys, the river was a hundred and eighty metres wide, and could be forded, except for a space of about thirty to fifty metres. But the fordable passage, which was only a metre and a third deep, was narrow, and would not allow of more than five or six horsemen riding abreast.

Condé had reconnoitred the banks of the river himself the previous day, in order to ascertain what resistance might be expected, and now waited for Louis XIV. before giving his final instructions. The King of France having come up to him the same evening, after sending him notice of his arrival in a note written by his own hand, Condé disposed the army in order of battle. The right wing, entrusted to Foucault, extended towards Arnheim; the infantry, commanded by Saint Abre, remained in the centre; while the left wing, forming the advanced guard, drew near to Tolhuys. It was this passage which, by reason of the facility of approach and the bend of the river that enabled cannon to be placed so as to sweep the opposite shore, had been selected by Condé as the point of attack. The following day, Sunday, June 12, 1672, at daybreak, arrangements were made for setting up a bridge of boats under cover of a battery. Wurtz, who had succeeded Montbas, had no artillery with which to oppose it; he did not even attempt to disturb or retard the preparations for crossing the river by means of the toll-house, which was only furnished, it is true, with three brass guns, and occupied by a few soldiers armed with muskets.

Louis XIV. and Condé were, however, not perfectly confident of the success of their enterprise. Insufficiency of materials delayed the construction of the bridge, and the fire of the French battery, by giving the alarm to the Prince of Orange, who was encamped in the neighbourhood, might bring him in time to the assistance of his lieutenant. Impatient to begin the action, Louis XIV. had given orders to the dragoons on the right wing to attempt a crossing at the ford of Heussen. The rapidity of the stream and the fire of the enemy's detachment guarding the banks obliged them to retreat hastily. The King of France was now anxious that the ford of Tolhuys should be examined in the hope that an easier crossing might

be found there for the cavalry. Count de Guiche, eldest son of Marshal Grammont, who had accompanied Condé in his last reconnaissance and who commanded the advanced guard, offered his services for the purpose of ascertaining this.

De Guiche, who had incurred Louis's displeasure for having attempted to rival him in the affections of the Duchess of Orleans, was impatient to recover the royal favour by some brilliant exploit. He obtained as his guide a peasant named John Peterson, and, heedless of danger, exposed himself to the fire from the tower, and returned to pronounce the passage fordable. During his residence in Poland, he had often seen cavalry swim across the rivers with ease, and success was to justify his confidence. Condé, more prudent, hesitated to share it. Before running any risk he wished to form his own conclusion as to the chances in favour of the bold enterprise proposed to him, but ended by allowing himself to be convinced.

Orders to cross the river were conveyed by De Guiche to the first ten squadrons of Pilois' brigade, who were ranged in line, under cover of a row of willows which served to screen them. De Guiche was one of the first to plunge into the water, preceded by the gentlemen of his household. He was accompanied by some forty volunteers belonging to the most illustrious of the French nobility, and was followed by the first squadron of cuirassiers, commanded by Major Langallerie. Such was the haste that several horsemen, missing the ford, were carried away by the current and drowned. Those who reached the left bank were driven back into the river by the enemy's cavalry. Colonel la Leck's regiment, of which Wurtz had taken the command, advanced boldly into the water to stop the French advanced guard, and fired a murderous volley. About a hundred horsemen and volunteers were mortally wounded, amongst whom were Guitry, Grand Master of the King's Guard, Count Nogent, major-general and captain of the guard, and Count Rochefort Theobon. The ranks of the assailants were thus thrown into confusion which might have been fatal.

'It was still uncertain which would yield, the enemy or

ourselves,' writes Count de Guiche in the narrative of that day which he has left behind him. 'But the cavalry of the States, who had bravely commenced resistance, were unable to prolong it. Finding themselves unsupported by the regiments that had remained on the shore, they were forced to retreat before the five French squadrons which followed the advanced guard, under the orders of Count Revel, and which had formed themselves into a compact line to resist the current. Their advance was covered by the battery established on the right bank, which dispersed the enemy's horsemen, who had advanced into the river, and prevented them from re-forming on the bank. Without attempting to return to the charge they fell back in disorder on the infantry, while the two other regiments of cavalry who had not taken part in the action retired without fighting. 'It is said,' writes Beverningh to De Witt, 'that our troops stood pretty firm, but that they were not in a condition to support one another.'

A passage once forced, the French gendarmerie commanded by Soubise, and followed by the King's Household, crossed the river without any difficulty. At the same time the Prince of Condé, swimming his horses, crossed over in a boat with his son, the Duke d'Enghien, and his nephew, the Duke de Longueville. He was accompanied by several other nobles, MM. de Marsillac and de Bouillon, and the Marquis de Beringhen, the King's Master of the Horse. Having reached the opposite bank, he found himself face to face with the Dutch infantry, who, abandoned by the greater part of the cavalry, had entrenched themselves in a favourable position behind the ditches, hedges, and palings of the meadows, near a toll-house, about a thousand paces from the shore. Threatened with the onslaught of five or six thousand horsemen whom Condé could bring against them, and hemmed in by overwhelming forces, they were reduced to one regiment, that of Aylva, augmented by a few companies. They were standing immovable, ready to ask for quarter, when the volunteers advanced with impetuosity to the attack, with the Duke d'Enghien at their head. Condé tried in vain to stop them till he had received the reinforcements that were crossing

the river; he only caught them up within reach of the enemy's fire, and attempted to avert the consequences of their imprudence by summoning the Dutch infantry to lay down their arms on condition that their lives should be spared.

Carried away by the ardour of youth, and heated by wine, the Duke d'Enghien and the Duke de Longueville, followed by some of their companions in arms, rushed towards the inclosure which served the enemy as a fortified camp. The Duke de Longueville was the first to tear down one of the barriers, and with cries of 'Kill! kill!' levelled his pistol at the first man whom he found within shot. At that moment the Dutch infantry, resuming their arms, fired a volley at close quarters. The Duke de Longueville was the first victim, and the Chevalier de Marsillac was killed at his side. Other victims fell also: Tassé, nephew of Marshal de la Force, the Marquis d'Aubusson, the Marquis de Boury, the Marquis de Beauveau, and Brouilly, adjutant of the body-guard. In addition to these the Prince de Marsillac, eldest son of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, was severely wounded; Count Vivonne, Commander of the King's galleys, Beringhen, Master of the Horse, and the Marquis de Termes, were also disabled.

Condé himself, seeing his son and nephew engaged, had thrown himself into the *mêlée*. Having hitherto been spared in every battle-field, he here received his first wound; a pistol shot, fired by a Dutch officer named Ossembrok, fractured his left wrist. The assailants fell back, and Wurtz, making a final effort, brought back to the charge the two squadrons which he had been able to keep together, while the infantry, advancing, made ready for a second volley. The struggle was too unequal to be prolonged; the advanced guard of the French cavalry carried away by De Guiche and led by Count Revel, who received three sword wounds, advanced with all speed to the assistance of Condé and his volunteers. The enemy's cavalry gave way before them and took to flight, carrying away Wurtz in the rout; they penetrated through the ranks of the infantry, which they surrounded on all sides, and from which the Chevalier de Vendôme, who at the age of seventeen was serving his first campaign, captured a flag. Irritated by his

wound and exasperated by the death of his nephew, the young Duke de Longueville, Condé no longer made any efforts to spare these last combatants. They were soon at the mercy of their conquerors, and amongst those who survived the greater number were made prisoners: it was only with great difficulty that a few officers and the rest of the foot soldiers were able to escape through the fences.

The same evening the French infantry quietly crossed the river on a bridge of boats; they were followed by the artillery, and the military train, including seven or eight hundred waggons for provisions, while the cavalry, fearing a renewed attack on the part of the Prince of Orange, had remained in order of battle on the bank of the river, of which they had taken possession. The King, having sent for Turenne, who had remained at head-quarters at Rees, rejoined his troops on the other bank, and publicly embraced Count de Guiche, as a mark of his satisfaction at the happy audacity to which the success of the attack was due, addressing him besides in terms such as he knew so well how to use when he wished to captivate. He then proceeded to visit Condé, who had been conveyed to the house of a peasant, in order to inquire himself as to the wound that might endanger a health so precious to the State, 'and gave up the first few moments to the promptings of nature, and of the friendship and esteem which he had for the Prince.' Two hours later Condé recrossed the river in the boat in which he had previously crossed it, bearing with him the body of the Duke de Longueville, covered with a cloak, and received in a barn the envoys who, coming to offer his nephew the throne of Poland, found only a corpse before them. 'I cannot tell you,' he writes to his sister, 'how impatient I am to be near you, in the hope that my presence may in some measure soften your affliction. I protest to you that it is a thing I desire with extreme ardour, having never felt anything more deeply than this.'

Such was the passage of the Rhine, celebrated as one of the most glorious exploits of Louis XIV.'s reign, and which had not cost 200 men. The King, who had been on horseback for twenty-four hours without rest, issuing his orders for the

minutest details, might have claimed the success. He does not, however, assume to himself any merit in the narrative he has left behind him. 'I was present,' he says, 'at this passage, which was bold, vigorous, brilliant, and glorious for the nation.' France was proud of it on her King's account, and gave way to an enthusiasm which, a month later, was echoed in Boileau's celebrated epistle. 'To throw oneself into a great river, like dogs after a stag,' writes Madame de Sévigné, 'without being either drowned or cut down on landing, all this so entirely surpasses my imagination that it makes my head whirl.'

No doubt the passage of the Rhine was less bold and certainly less heroic than it was considered at that time, since it had scarcely been disputed; but it gave to the King of France none the less all the advantages of a great victory, by forcing the enemy to abandon without a battle the line of defence which might have arrested the invasion. When the Prince of Orange learnt that Louis had thus opened a way for himself into the territory of the United Provinces, he did not take advantage of the opportunity afforded him of attacking the French army. 'It might have been placed in the greatest danger,' as Count d'Estrades writes, 'because it was cut in two so long as the bridge of boats was not completed.' The Prince might therefore have hazarded a bold stroke, either by advancing to assail the enemy's cavalry on the left bank before it had entrenched itself, or by surprising the French infantry on the right bank. He appeared, it is true, disposed to adopt this energetic and perhaps rash measure, but he allowed himself to be too easily turned aside by persons who, as Wicquefort writes, 'were not possessed of so much courage or so much honour as himself.'

He could no longer hesitate in hastening a retreat which perhaps he had calculated upon since the capture of the frontier towns, and the anticipation of which would explain the inadequate measures he had taken for the defence of the Rhine. That river once crossed, the Yssel could no longer serve as a barrier against invasion, and it was necessary to take immediate steps for preventing the army being taken in the rear, at the risk of being overwhelmed without the power of

retreating. The Prince of Orange therefore thought himself authorised in making use of the full powers left him by the commissioners of the States-General in case of necessity, which had just been confirmed to him by the States of Holland. Orders were immediately issued by the Council of War for the removal of the camp. It remained to be settled which would be the best route to take, by sea or by land. The sea route was that of the Zuyder Zee, which would enable the army to fall back without difficulty on Holland. The land route was that of Utrecht, which the Prince of Orange preferred as being the shorter, so that the troops would not be exposed to the danger of being intercepted before reaching their place of embarkation at Kampen, and he hastened to give the signal for departure.

By abandoning the line of the Yssel, he kept under his command an army which, in spite of the inferiority of his forces, might still suffice to arrest the enemy. Though he had not as yet received the last reinforcements that had been despatched to him, he was sure of rejoining them in his retreat, and taking into account the losses, reckoned at 1,500, which the passage of the Rhine had cost him, he had at his disposal about 29,000 men. By agreement with the deputies to the camp, he only took with him 12,000 for the defence of Holland, thus separating himself from 16,000 or 17,000 men, 8,000 of whom he left in the fortified towns on the Yssel, while he employed the rest in strengthening the garrisons of Arnheim and Nimeguen.

It was the greatest mistake that could have been committed, and involved consequences far more fatal than the passage of the Rhine. The report of the deputies to the camp explains how this resolution was come to. Prince John Maurice of Nassau was the first to propose it. On the afternoon of June 12, he writes from head-quarters at Dieren to the deputies to the camp who were at Zutphen to announce the passage of the Rhine and the departure of the Prince of Orange, who had just gone to Arnheim. He represented to them the necessity of abandoning the entrenchment of the Yssel, so as not to be taken in rear by the enemy; he asks for

their instructions, and suggests to them that he should send the greater part of the regiments back to the towns, keeping with him only the remainder of the infantry and the cavalry, to be formed into a body capable of making a stand against the enemy. The deputies were in the greatest embarrassment; no instructions had been given them for such an extremity. They immediately gave orders for sending the artillery back to Utrecht, with the exception of the larger guns, which should be embarked at Kampen, and they distributed the infantry regiments amongst the different garrisons, with the exception of six which they left with the cavalry at the disposal of the Prince of Orange. They gave him information forthwith of this distribution, by the Quartermaster-General Moyse Pain et Vin. The Prince of Orange sent for them the same day to Dieren. He expressed to them his displeasure at not having been consulted, and to satisfy him they altered in accordance with his wishes the distribution of the garrisons destined for the defence of the fortified towns.

With regard to the reserve corps brought back by the captain-general, the latter contented himself with augmenting it by one regiment of infantry, but, on the other hand, detached from it three regiments of cavalry to be despatched to the forts on the Yssel. With the exception of the orders thus given for substituting certain regiments for others, the Prince of Orange now ratified the decision of the deputies to the camp. He consented thus to a considerable weakening of the army, dangerously reducing the last remaining forces of which the republic could dispose for her defence. But he had to serve his apprenticeship in war before becoming a great general, and the splendour of the military glory he acquired later cannot be obscured by the inexperience shown in his first attempts.

The dispersion of the army was the more disastrous, that the 16,000 or 17,000 men who had been detached from the main body, representing fifteen regiments of infantry and three of cavalry, remained for the greater part at the mercy of the enemy. In fact, the fortified places to which they were being sent were too far from the line of defence on which the

Prince of Orange was to fall back to be of any use in defending it. With the exception, moreover, of Arnheim and Nimeguen, these towns were for the most part ill-fortified and ill-provisioned, and the deputies to the camp did not deceive themselves as to the resistance they would be able to offer if taken in the rear by an army in possession of the country. In vain had Colonel Bampffield proposed to employ at any rate the three regiments of cavalry left behind by the Prince of Orange, 'to form with two or three regiments of infantry a flying column, which should be directed to keep the field and incessantly to annoy the enemy.' No steps were taken for organising this detachment, which might have done great service.

In this extremity the Grand Pensionary was not backward in his advice, with a view to preventing the commission of such fatal imprudence. In his daily correspondence with Beverningh, he had always recommended the direct retreat of the army upon Holland. In his opinion, 'it was impossible to retain all the fortresses; the main body of the army with its chiefs should therefore be brought back to Holland by the Zuyder Zee, while the greater part of the cavalry should be quartered on the frontiers of Brabant, which cover Holland and Zealand.' This was, according to him, the only means of making effectually a final effort at resistance. He had been careful to represent 'that the Province of Holland, after having worn itself out by every possible sacrifice for the service of the republic, without having retained any State militia for its own protection, had the right, as soon as the position was no longer tenable outside its borders, to employ all the forces of the Union for its own safety, the welfare of other provinces solely depending on its preservation.'

The patriotic advice of the Grand Pensionary met with insurmountable resistance from that provincial egoism which is the usual rock on which every Federal Government splits. The fear of being accused of using for the defence of Holland regiments subsidised by other provinces, prevented the deputies to the camp from bringing back the entire army, and the Prince of Orange did not venture to force them to do so,

because he shrank from a decision which might have deprived him of the support of the provinces whose good-will he was interested in obtaining. A letter from Louvois to Letellier puts this supposition beyond a doubt. 'The hostile army,' he writes, 'diminishes daily, as much from the state of alarm in which the troops are, as because each province reclaims those it has paid for to be employed in its own defence.' The occupation of the fortresses on the Yssel was, in fact, entrusted to the infantry regiments of Overryssel, Groningen, and Friesland, while the Prince of Orange only brought back, besides the cavalry, the regiments of Holland, Guelders, and Utrecht. The ruin of the republic was nearly being the consequence.

Orders for retreat once given, the reduced army corps under the Prince's orders moved first towards Arnheim, in order, if possible, to re-enter Betuwe and thus check the progress of the invasion. But the enemy's advanced guard was already in sight of the town, and it became necessary to cut the bridges hastily, in order to prevent the passage of the Leck. Leaving in the fortress of Arnheim the three last regiments of infantry recalled from the Netherlands, which had only joined him in his retreat, and of which he ought rather to have made a reinforcement for his main body, the Prince of Orange hastened his march upon Utrecht. He had to decide whether he would wait there to oppose the enemy with the available forces still remaining to him. The situation of the place and the disposition of the inhabitants did not appear to favour an attempt at resistance. The combined works of entrenchment and inundations for protecting the line of Utrecht, which had been vainly advised by De Witt, had remained incomplete. The inhabitants, resigning themselves to despair and fearing that they would not be spared by the victors if they defended themselves, would not even allow themselves to be defended. They announced that they would close the gates against the Prince of Orange, and would open them to the King of France, and in order to remain masters of the town, they had seized the keys from the magistrates. When the army approached they refused to allow it to enter, and only consented to provision it.

The States-General, who had foreseen this state of affairs, had taken alarm and appeared inclined to recall into Holland the troops that had been brought away from the camp. But the deputies who represented the Province of Utrecht in the Federal Assembly, Van Weede and Van der Hoolk, urged that it was not advisable to trust to news which might or might not be authentic, declaring that in any case it would be easy to inspire other sentiments in the citizens. To satisfy them, the States-General merely authorised the recall into Holland of the artillery and militia companies, of which the greater part were in the pay of the towns of that province, and determined that the army should remain in cantonment at Utrecht, unless the deputies to the camp, to whom they gave full powers, should consider that it might be more usefully employed. On receipt of the report in which the latter announced that the troops would not be admitted into the town, the States-General, overruling the representations made them by the deputies of Utrecht, forthwith transmitted to the Prince of Orange orders to retreat.

The very day on which this resolution was voted at the Hague, the town of Utrecht had assumed an entirely different attitude. The populace were indignant at the weakness of the burghers. When they saw the artillery depart, they could contain themselves no longer, and began to utter threats. The States of the Province, in obedience to this impulse, invited the Prince of Orange with his staff and the deputies to the camp to a conference on the subject of the defence of the town. The burghers armed themselves, and, with noisy enthusiasm succeeding to their previous hostility, received him with acclamations. This revulsion of opinion influenced the deliberations of the States of the Province, and on the evening of June 16, after protracted discussions, they determined upon resistance. The Prince of Orange gave assurances that on the following day his troops should take up their position along the canal and the dyke that protected the town. 'If this town is resolved to behave courageously,' writes Beverningh to the States-General, 'I imagine it is not your intention

that we should abandon it to extremities.' The decision of the Council of War was adjourned till the return of the commissioners who proceeded to the Hague for fresh instructions.

In order to gain time, the Prince of Orange, who wished to defend the town in the hope of arresting the progress of the enemy, repaired, the following morning, to the Assembly of the States of Utrecht. He demanded that the suburbs should be destroyed or burnt and the fortified dyke cut, in order to render the approach to the town inaccessible. The States of Utrecht, in consequence of the hesitation of the deputies of the town, could not resolve upon this sacrifice, and would only consent to the flooding of a portion of the country. The Prince of Orange and the deputies to the camp being now relieved from all uncertainty, at once made known their now irrevocable determination of hastening their departure, in spite of the remonstrances and lamentations addressed to them by the States of Utrecht. They thus rendered the republic a service which contributed to save her from destruction.

The States-General, on their side, had done nothing but shilly-shally. On receiving Beverningh's letter informing them that the town of Utrecht had come to the determination to resist, they had hesitated to abandon it. But after hearing the last report of the deputies to the camp, they renewed their first instructions, by which they had given the latter full powers to stop or continue the retreat; though from their refusal to give any orders for detaining the army, they appeared rather to desire its speedy return to Holland. To please the States of the Province of Utrecht, however, by an apparent concession, they sent a messenger to the Prince of Orange by night, commissioned to assure him that they did not mean by this to prejudice his decision in any way. The messenger did not reach Utrecht till the army, which had started at daybreak, June 18, was already at some distance. The States-General could not but approve the action of the Prince of Orange in thus taking the initiative. In announcing to his brother the departure of the troops, the

Grand Pensionary justifies this retreat by the refusal to destroy the suburbs of the town.

An attempt to employ the last remnants of the army for the preservation of Utrecht would only have served to complete the ruin of the republic, without the gain of any advantage by this line of defence, which would have opened a way to the enemy on all sides. Holland alone could serve as an entrenchment against invasion. It was, therefore, the States of that Province who decided on the last halting-places of the army of the Prince of Orange. They assigned to it positions protecting the frontiers of their territory, which it occupied in five separate detachments.

According to the letter written by the Grand Pensionary to his brother, the army only consisted now of 'seven imperfect regiments, whose numbers did not exceed 4,000 or 4,500 foot and 5,000 horse.' We must not, however, trust implicitly to this statement, made during hours of anguish as to the fate of the country. According to statements derived from the letters of the commanders of each detachment, the seven regiments of which De Witt speaks were only the infantry regiments, and these were supplemented by twelve or fourteen regiments of cavalry, more or less incomplete. Moreover, to the troops reckoned by De Witt at 9,500 men should be added the Spanish cavalry, numbering 1,650 horse, and the greater part of the militia companies which had been brought back from the camp. But under any circumstances the united forces scarcely amounted to 12,000 men, of which 6,700 were cavalry, 4,500 infantry, and about 800 or 900 militia. This was the last body of reserve that remained to be opposed to the invasion.

The posts on which depended the safety of Holland were so skilfully chosen as to make up for inadequacy of numbers. The divisions entrusted with their defence comprised regiments both of infantry and cavalry, reinforced by the Spanish squadrons. On the south, Major-General Wurtz was sent with 2,700 men to Gorcum, or Gornichen, which connected the frontiers of Holland with Bois-le-Duc and other fortresses of North Brabant. On the north, Prince John Maurice of Nassau,

at the head of 2,000 men, was entrusted with the defence of the post of Muyden, which covered Amsterdam. In the centre the Marquis de Louvignies, who commanded the Spanish cavalry, occupied the post of Schoonhoven with 1,500 men, having the detachment of Wurtz on his right. On his left, Count Hornes, with 1,300 or 1,400 men, took up his quarters near Gouda. Finally the principal position which connected all the others, that of Nieuwerbrug, between Woerden and Bodegrave, was reserved for the Prince of Orange, who had at his disposal the largest part of the troops, commanded under him by Count Zuytlestein. They consisted of 3,600 men, of which 1,400 were infantry, and he could thus either reinforce any of the defensive positions or himself assume the offensive. The militia companies were distributed amongst the various detachments, many of them being assembled at head-quarters. The battle-field was thus narrowed, and became a vast entrenched camp defended by five bastions, where a last refuge was reserved for the independence of the United Provinces.

At sea, the fortune of war was more favourable to the republic, and enabled her to avert the dangers of a naval invasion, which would have brought about inevitable ruin. The junction of the two hostile fleets, which could not be prevented, secured to the enemy the superiority in naval forces. The English fleet numbered 105 sail, of which sixty-five were ships of war or frigates, and sixteen fire-ships, carrying 3,376 guns and 22,442 men. The French fleet comprised sixty-seven sail, of which thirty were ships of war, five frigates, and eight fire-ships, and carried 1,784 guns and 10,744 men. They were divided into three squadrons, of which the two English, called squadrons of the red and of the blue, were commanded, the first by the Duke of York, Lord High Admiral of England, the second by Vice-Admiral Montagu, Earl of Sandwich. The French squadron, called squadron of the white, which had put to sea in the month of April, was under the command of Count d'Estrées, Vice-Admiral of France, assisted by Duquesne as Lieutenant-Admiral.

The fleet of the United Provinces, even including all the galiots, one of which had been put at the disposal of the celebrated marine painter, Van der Welde, did not exceed 133 sail, of which sixty-one were ships of war, fourteen frigates, and thirty-six fire-ships. They carried 4,484 guns, were manned by 20,738 sailors and 5,500 marines, and were divided into three squadrons. The Admiral-in-Chief, Ruyter, had reserved for himself that of the centre, while the right and left wings were commanded by Lieutenant-Admirals van Ghent and Banckert. Cornelius de Witt represented the States-General on board the Admiral's ship, and in accordance with his wishes, no other commissioners had been associated with him.

The expedition to the mouth of the Thames attempted by the squadron of Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent against the English ships that had taken refuge there, not having had the success which might have cast lustre on the opening of the campaign, there remained only one step to be taken, an advance against the two allied fleets, which had met at Portsmouth. Cornelius de Witt was impatient for battle. 'In my opinion nothing better can be done,' he writes to his brother, 'than to tempt the fortune of war (the sooner the better), as soon as I consider that an engagement can take place without prejudice to the State and with a chance of success, leaving the issue to Almighty God.' He begged, however, for orders, not wishing to expose himself, in the event of a failure, to the accusation of having rashly hazarded the forces of the State, and he declared himself ready to carry out his instructions exactly, even to the sacrifice of his life. John de Witt wrote back to his brother congratulating him on being willing to advance against the enemy, and thanking God for the courage and firmness he displayed. The States-General, after hesitating to give him authority to attack, ended by leaving him full powers, and the Grand Pensionary encouraged him to make use of them promptly.

For more than a week the Dutch fleet sailed in search of the hostile squadrons for the purpose of forcing an attack. They had thus time to receive the last reinforcements they

could hope for, in default of the eighteen reserve ships which were not yet equipped. Daring volunteers belonging to the first families in the land, Hasselaar of Amsterdam, Van Berg of Naarden, and Heemskerke, nephew of Van Beuningen, profited by this delay to join the fleet; they had equipped at their own expense a number of sailors, and were determined to distinguish themselves by brilliant exploits. The pursuit of the enemy was continued without interruption. 'If God grant us the continuation of a favourable wind,' writes Cornelius de Witt to his brother in terms of antique simplicity, 'I hope that we shall be at work soon, and I pray that success may favour us for the maintenance of our liberty and the honour of the State.'

The allied fleets had no expectation of being attacked. They had anchored at Solebay, on the east coast of England, between Harwich and Yarmouth, and after disembarking some of the crews who had been attacked with illness, were completing their stores, with the view of making a descent upon the coast of Holland. Notwithstanding the warnings given to the Duke of York by the Earl of Sandwich, they were not in order of battle, and were only preparing to celebrate the birthday of the King of England. On Tuesday, June 7, 1672, at day-break, the French captain De Cogolin, who was on the lookout, was the first to perceive the fleet of the States-General, and gave the alarm. The confusion was such, that several of the English ships were obliged to cut their cables in order to place themselves in line. But the wind, which had moderated, delayed the attack, and the surprise to which all Ruyter's measures had been directed was thus balked.

In the presence of the enemy, Ruyter exhorted the naval force under his command valiantly to do their duty; he represented warmly to the principal officers whom he had summoned on board his ship, the importance of the action which was about to take place. 'The safety of the country, the liberty of the United Provinces, the fortunes and the lives of their inhabitants depended,' he declared, 'on this battle, and only the valour of the crews could secure the republic against the unjust violence of the two kings who were attacking her.' The

order of battle, as arranged, opposed Lieutenant-Admiral Banckert to Count d'Estrées, and Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent to Vice-Admiral Montagu, on the two wings. Ruyter, who with Cornelius de Witt was on board the 'Seven Provinces,' assisted by Lieutenant-Admiral van Nès, retained the central position facing the squadron of the red, commanded by the Duke of York, who was on board the 'Royal Prince.' He himself gave the signal for the battle about eight o'clock in the morning, by advancing to attack the commander-in-chief of the hostile fleet, after pointing him out to his chief pilot, Zegen, to whom he said only these words, 'That is our man.' The pilot, lifting his cap, replied unconcernedly, 'Admiral, you shall have him,' and steered the 'Seven Provinces' straight for the 'Royal Prince.' The two ships attacked each other furiously for more than an hour, and continued the fight in the midst of a thick smoke which wrapped them in obscurity. About nine o'clock, the main mast of the English flag-ship fell with its red standard, and, had it not been for the calm, the vessel would have been in danger of being run into by fire-ships. Fearing that she would soon be disabled, the Duke of York made up his mind to abandon her, stepped into a boat through the port-hole of his cabin, was rowed across the front of the enemy's line, and transferred his flag to the 'Saint Michael.' This ship also was so disabled before the close of the day, that the Duke of York was forced to transfer his flag to the 'London,' where he courageously continued the engagement. Around the 'Seven Provinces' the battle raged furiously, and no sooner had the 'Royal Prince' been forced to retreat than she was replaced by other vessels which surrounded the Admiral's ship with a circle of fire, without, however, being able to approach her, or to silence her guns.

The other ships belonging to Ruyter's squadron were also engaged. His son, Captain Engel de Ruyter, who from the age of fifteen had bravely accompanied him on all his expeditions, nearly lost his ship, which was struck by six shots and had three guns disabled; he himself received a wound in the chest, which for three days placed his life in danger. Lieu-

tenant-Admiral van Nès, after firing into the enemy for two hours, was forced to withdraw from the fight, one of the ships of his squadron, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Palms, having been boarded; as soon as he was able to extricate himself, he made up for lost time by attacking the 'Royal Catherine,' of eighty guns, commanded by Captain John Chicheley. He despatched one of his fire-ships towards the hostile vessel, at the same time firing a broadside into her. The fire-ship was kept off, and was nearly being driven against Van Nès' ship. But the 'Royal Catherine,' beginning to sink, was forced to surrender. Van Nès despatched two ships to sink or burn her, after receiving her crew on board. His instructions were badly carried out, and while the victors were busy pillaging, they allowed the English ship to be retaken and she escaped from their hands.

On the left wing, the fight that had been begun between Banckert and Count d'Estrées was not continued by the French squadron. After a first engagement, the latter withdrew towards the south for the purpose of getting out into the Channel, and was pursued by Banckert, who annoyed them with continuous firing, but was not able to approach near enough to cut off their retreat. The King of France had contented himself with making his ships spectators of the fight, in order to allow the two great maritime powers to exhaust their naval forces, without doing any injury to his own.

On the right wing, the battle waged furiously on either side. Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent fell upon the squadron of the blue with such impetuosity, that he threw terror and confusion into their midst; but he was stopped in his hasty career by a cannon ball which put an end to his life. His squadron, not receiving the expected signal, did not continue their advance. But, orders to conceal his death having been given to the Captain of Marines, Panhuys, who had gone to announce it to Ruyter and Cornelius de Witt, his flag was kept flying and the fight was resumed with increased obstinacy, the chief effort being directed against the English Vice-Admiral, Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, who was on board the 'Royal James.'

The first attack was made upon him by Captain van Brakel, who in the last war against England had taken the chief part in the victory of Chatham, and who was impatient to distinguish himself by some fresh exploit. Separating himself from Ruyter's squadron in defiance of discipline, and carried away by his rash valour, he was not afraid to measure his strength against a ship of 102 guns, manned by 900 sailors, although he had only to oppose to her a vessel armed with 72 guns and a crew of 300 men. Having approached her without replying to her guns, he threw out his grappling irons and fired a broadside into her. The two ships remained locked together, and their crews were mingled in a hand-to-hand fight. When Vice-Admiral Montagu succeeded by desperate efforts in disengaging himself, after a fight lasting an hour and a half, he was no longer in a condition to resist a fresh onset. He succeeded, however, in sinking three fire-ships which were advancing to destroy him. But being attacked by Vice-Admiral Sweers, who had succeeded Van Ghent in the command of the squadron, he could not prevent another Dutch fire-ship approaching him, under cover of the enemy's guns; she was commanded by Van de Ryn, the bold captain who had broken the chains of the 'Rochester' in the expedition of Chatham. The 'Royal James,' whose powder had been wetted by the leaks she had sprung, was forthwith reduced to ashes and burnt without blowing up. The sailors and soldiers on board threw themselves into the sea, where they were nearly all drowned. The captain, though wounded, and the lieutenant, were saved and conducted as prisoners on board Ruyter's ship, where they received honourable treatment. Vice-Admiral Montagu shared the fate of his ship; the boat in which he had attempted to escape with his son being overcrowded by the numbers who jumped into it, became waterlogged and sank beneath the waves.

The centre squadron, after being the first to open the battle, had borne the brunt of it longest. Ruyter and Van Nès fought ceaselessly till evening against the squadron of the red, still commanded by the Duke of York, who continued to fight obstinately. Having lost sight of Admiral

Banckert, who was pursuing the French ships, and being separated from his lieutenant-admiral Van Nès, whose way was stopped by superior forces, and rashly abandoned by Captain van Brackel, Ruyter no longer had any vessels with him but a yacht and the frigate commanded by Captain Philip d'Almonde. This isolation had nearly proved fatal to him. Having been joined by one of the divisions of the squadron of the blue, the Duke of York attempted to cut off his retreat by making the English ships lie to round the 'Seven Provinces,' against which he directed his fire-ships, driven on by a favourable wind. Ruyter had no boats with which to defend himself from their formidable approach, his own having been sunk. He saw himself threatened with the same fate to which Vice-Admiral Montagu had fallen a victim, when the commander of the yacht and the captain of the frigate who were with him resolved to sacrifice themselves to save him. They advanced towards the fire-ships, one of which ran into the frigate, but the fire was only smouldering, and Captain d'Almonde had time to disengage himself. The commander of the other English fire-ship, perceiving that the one that preceded him was in flames, lost courage, and did not venture to carry out the orders that had been given him. His lieutenant-admiral having at length forced his way through the squadron of the red, and come up to him, Ruyter had no longer any cause for fear. The division of the squadron of the blue which had surrounded him, finding itself in danger of being caught between two fires, retired at full speed, and the indefatigable Van Nès, having extricated the admiral's ship, went to the assistance of his brother, Rear-Admiral John van Nès, who was still engaged on the right wing with the last division of the squadron of the blue, which had remained in line of battle after Vice-Admiral Montagu's disaster. He succeeded in dispersing them, and thus gloriously ended the fight. Night coming on prevented the victory being followed up. The retreat of the English squadrons would have been changed into flight if Lieutenant-Admiral Banckert, who had drawn away too far in pursuit of the French squadron had been able to come up with the fleet before evening.

The engagement had lasted no less than twelve hours. Ruyter declared that 'he had never before taken part in so desperate and prolonged a battle.' His own ship had consumed 25,000 pounds of powder, and fired 2,500 shots. The lieutenant of the 'Royal James,' brought on board as a prisoner, himself paid tribute to his boldness and vigilance. 'He is at once,' he said, 'admiral, captain, pilot, sailor, and soldier; he is everything in one.'

The courage shown by Cornelius de Witt was no less worthy of admiration. Ill, suffering from rheumatic pains in his arms and legs, but triumphing by the strength of his mind over bodily weakness, he took his place close to Ruyter near the helm. Incapable of standing, he had a chair brought to him bearing the arms of the republic, and sat there, as if in the seat of government, to give the signal of command and to share at the post of honour the dangers of the crew. In order to represent with dignity the sovereignty of the States-General, whose delegate he was, he was escorted by twelve guards carrying halberds; three fell wounded at his feet, three more were killed, and their bodies thrown into the sea. Careless of the balls that were falling round him, having already dedicated his life to the service of his country, he remained calm and immovable on the deck till the close of the day. Writing to his brother, at five o'clock the following morning, to give him an account of the battle, he concludes his letter in these words, which give some notion of his indomitable energy: 'I am of opinion that we should begin again as soon as possible; I hope God will grant us the strength necessary for continuing to the death to do service to my dear country.'

The losses sustained by the enemy suffice to prove the success of the States-General. Their fleet had disabled the flag-ship commanded by the Duke of York, destroyed the vessel of Vice-Admiral Montagu, set on fire an eighty-gun ship and sunk two others, with the loss on their own side of only two frigates and most of their fire-ships; 2,500 men and eighteen captains had been killed or wounded on board the English fleet, without counting a great number of

prisoners. England and the United Provinces had lost two great warriors, Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, and Van Ghent. Both were solemnly interred with the honours that were their due, the former in Westminster Abbey, the latter in the Cathedral of Utrecht beneath the marble mausoleum erected to him at the expense of the republic.

The States-General and the States of Holland received from the Grand Pensionary the news conveyed in Cornelius de Witt's despatches, announcing the successful result of the battle of Solebay. After transmitting them in all haste to the Prince of Orange and the deputies at the camp, they hastened to send messages of congratulation and encouragement to Ruyter and to the Grand Pensionary's brother. 'We cannot refrain,' write the States-General to Cornelius de Witt in a despatch signed by Mauregnault, President of the Assembly, and the Secretary, Gaspard Fagel, 'from notifying to you by these presents our particular satisfaction at the manly courage, the great valour, and the vigilant solicitude displayed by you in the battle against the enemies of the State, and we rejoice in expressing to you all our pleasure.' The same day the States of Holland addressed to Cornelius de Witt the following letter: 'We have learnt with extreme satisfaction the admirable manner in which you have made use of the vessels of the States for the purpose of fighting the hostile fleets; we express to you our praises by these presents, and we pray you to continue in the same path for the good of the country.' These were the last expressions of gratitude he was to receive from his country.

A fresh battle was nearly being fought, by which the republic might have gained a victory that would have made her mistress of the seas. Cornelius de Witt and Ruyter were desirous of taking advantage of the separation of the two allied fleets to strike a final blow. On the night immediately following the battle, therefore, the Dutch fleet of a hundred sail boldly pursued the English ships. The next day, June 8, at daybreak, they came up with them, and were preparing to overwhelm them by superiority of numbers, when the approach of the French fleet destroyed their hopes. Ruyter,

however, was determined to offer battle; but a thick fog, which hid the enemy from him, placed a fresh obstacle in the way of the success of the enterprise which he vainly persisted in attempting. The Council of War did not dare allow him to venture so far from the coast till he had laid in fresh stores, and ordered him to anchor on the coast of Zealand, in sight of the large island of Walcheren, while several smaller ships were to remain at sea to watch the movements of the enemy.

The Grand Pensionary hastened to respond to his brother's appeal, by hurrying on the equipment of reinforcements and the despatch of ammunition. Within three days the States of Holland forwarded to their fleet 9,000 cannon balls, and 100,000 pounds of powder. That the service of supplies might not be delayed, the States-General on their side prevailed on the directors of the East India Company to place at the disposal of the fleet all the reserves of powder in their magazines, and engaged to return the same amount out of the first deliveries made by the State arsenals. Van Beuningen, besides, received orders to purchase or borrow for the service of the navy any supplies of powder which he might be able to procure in the Spanish Netherlands.

The disasters of the land forces, the passage of the Rhine and the rapid progress of the French invasion, made these fresh preparations for naval armament useless. Contrary to the advice of the deputies of Enckhuyzen, which was considered too bold, the States of Holland represented to the States-General the rashness of risking a fresh battle, and informed Cornelius de Witt of the sad extremity to which they were reduced. The Grand Pensionary therefore wrote to his brother 'that they must be satisfied with watching over the arrival of the ships from the Indies, whose capture would be a terrible blow for the State, and must be careful for the present not to send away the fleet or expose it to a fresh encounter with the enemy.' Cornelius de Witt, however, still continued to exercise his functions as Commissioner of the States on board the flag-ship till the increase of his rheumatic and gouty pains, triumphing over his will, had deprived him of the power

of movement. Ruyter, who had never ceased to live with him on terms of brotherly affection and cordial friendship, as he testified publicly a few weeks later, would have liked to retain him at his side, in order to profit by his advice, but the States-General, informed of his illness, sent him permission to come on shore in order to take measures for his cure.

Borne down by suffering, Cornelius de Witt hastened to profit by the leave granted him; he went on board a galiot, escorted by two frigates, and accompanied by his guard of sailors and soldiers, and had himself conveyed to Dordrecht. In compliance with the urgent request of the deputies of the town, who were in fear of being attacked by the French army, he had prevailed on Ruyter to place at their disposal three thousand pounds of powder as a loan which they undertook to return. By way of compensation he refused to allow the artillery salute due to him as Commissioner of the States to be fired when he quitted the flag-ship, and would not consent to any expenditure of ammunition being made in his honour. Two days later he returned to his native town, where his wife was anxiously awaiting him. He was impatient to hasten his cure in order to place himself once more at the service of his country, hoping to enjoy his well-earned repose in his own home, and little foreseeing that in recompense for the glorious services which had already ruined his health, the barbarous ingratitude of his fellow-citizens was to cost him his life.

The increasing necessity for employing the naval stores and troops for defence on land made a fresh naval expedition impossible. The States of Holland, therefore, after the return of Cornelius de Witt, made up their minds to demand of the States-General that the fleet should be reduced one-third, leaving only forty-eight ships and eighteen frigates at sea; and this proposal was agreed to. Notwithstanding, however, the disarmament by which it was followed, the battle of Solebay had saved the republic. Not only did it leave intact all her naval resources and permit the States-General to employ them in the defence of their territory, but it had also obliged the allied fleets to withdraw, and had thus rendered impracticable the schemes for a descent whose object was to bring Zealand under

English domination. It had therefore prevented France and England from overwhelming the United Provinces beneath the weight of a double invasion which must have destroyed their independence. If matters came to the worst, the fleet would now offer an inviolable shelter to the inhabitants of the republic.

The United Provinces appeared, nevertheless, on the eve of being conquered. Whilst the King of France, after the passage of the Rhine, was advancing without opposition to the very frontiers of Holland, the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster were seizing upon Overijssel as an easy prey. With the contingent of 6,000 men, commanded by Luxembourg, which the King of France had placed at their disposal, they were able to send 20,000 men into the field, to whom the Bishop of Münster had added a large force of artillery and some howitzers which hitherto had not been employed in siege warfare. The Bishop himself commanded his troops, while the Elector of Cologne, whose great age precluded him from taking part in the campaign, was represented by the Bishop of Strasburg. The inroad of the enemies' troops into Overijssel through the territory of the Count of Bentheim met with no opposition. It had been impossible to arm the militia of that province, the command of which had been entrusted to Aylva. Internal divisions, which no sooner pacified were constantly breaking out again, prevented the States of the Province, who were assembled at Campen, from coming to any decision, and favoured the progress of the enemy, who, according to Wicquefort, 'found accomplices in a portion of the nobility and amongst some of the magistrates of the towns, who were anxious for a change of government, which would prevent their treachery being discovered.' Moreover, on the farther side of the Yssel there was no fortress to defend the frontier, and all the small towns which were without garrisons submitted one by one, on condition that they should be preserved from pillage. Even the town of Grolle scarcely made an attempt at resistance, although possessing all the means of defence in its ramparts, furnished with cannon, and its garrison of 800 men. No sooner had the bombardment commenced than the inhabitants, wild with terror, forced the commandant, Tongeel,

to demand from the besiegers free egress for his troops, which was granted him. The Bishop of Münster continued his march on Borkelo, Lockem, and Deutichem, of which he easily made himself master.

These first successes, accompanied by the news of the passage of the Rhine by the French army, and followed by the retreat of the troops withdrawn into Holland by the Prince of Orange, encouraged the Bishop of Münster to cross the Yssel, which was no longer defended, and to attempt a more difficult exploit, that of laying siege to Deventer. This town was in a position to resist. 'I have good hopes for it,' writes Beverningh to De Witt. Besides being well fortified, it had a numerous garrison, consisting of 1,500 regular soldiers, eight companies of burghers, and 1,400 peasants, under the command of Colonel Dierick Stecke, governor of the fortress. A determined resistance would have forced the besiegers to retire. They were already divided among themselves. The Duke of Luxembourg could no longer keep on terms with the Bishop of Münster, whose obstinacy wore out his patience, and the Bishop of Strasburg was not much more inclined to continue the campaign with his exacting ally. 'He only asks to be allowed to withdraw his troops,' writes Luxembourg, 'and to leave M. de Münster to carry out alone the visions with which his head is filled.'

The besieged, however, betrayed by their magistrates, were not in a position to take advantage of the rivalries between the besiegers. In vain did the townspeople, more courageous here than elsewhere, show a bold determination to defend themselves. The selfishness of the magistrates, who would not allow their country houses on the opposite side of the Yssel to be destroyed, gave the enemy a shelter for setting up their batteries. Moreover, the destruction of the bridge of boats, and the obstacles opposed to its reconstruction by the burgomaster, Nielandt, who was in league with the Bishop of Münster, deprived the garrison of the power of making sorties. Finally, the weakness of the governor, whom the bombardment caused to forget his forty-seven years of military service, rendered useless the gallant efforts made by the troops and

the burgher companies to save the fortress. It was resolved, in spite of the opposition of three members of the magistracy, to despatch commissioners to arrange a capitulation. The negotiators announced on their return that, on condition of the union of the town to the Empire under the joint government of two German princes, they had obtained a promise of the free exercise of the reformed religion and the retention of their magistrates, as well as respect for private property. No guarantee was demanded on behalf of the garrison, who with the exception of the superior officers were to remain prisoners of war. The councillor Bochkolt, indignant at this cowardly surrender, refused to ratify the capitulation, and called the burghers and soldiers to arms. With courage equal to his own they resolved to continue the defence; and to prevent the possibility of further treachery they attempted to secure the person of the burgomaster, Nielandt, who escaped them by a hasty flight. This bold attempt at resistance was baffled by the magistrates and superior officers. Satisfied with the advantages conceded to them, they took measures to prevent the rising being effectual, and during the night opened the gates of the town to the enemy.

The fatal example sent by Deventer was followed by Zwolle, where a successful defence seemed certain, with a garrison composed of five companies of cavalry and two regiments of infantry, commanded by two resolute officers, Colonels Bampffield and Ripperda, in whom the States had, with good reason, perfect confidence. Suspecting that negotiations had been entered into with the enemy, and not choosing to be their victims, the two colonels repaired to the Town Hall in order to ascertain the intentions of the magistrates. The latter, perceiving their approach, sent away the messenger by a side door, while the two officers came in by another entrance. Finding glasses on the table of the audience chamber, Bampffield and Ripperda suspected that a secret conference had taken place. When invited to drink they declared that they had other things to think of, and that the question of the moment was of fighting. Instead of responding to their appeal, the

magistrates urged them to abandon the outposts, and to withdraw their regiments into the town. The colonels, whose suspicions were thus confirmed, demanded of them an engagement not to treat with the enemy without their consent. The only promise they could obtain was a guarantee of liberty to all who should sign the capitulation. Having no longer any doubt that a surrender was now imminent, and being determined to escape the fate of the garrison of Deventer, Bampfield and Ripperda decided on retiring during the night with their troops, in order to preserve them for the service of the republic, and proceeded to join the detachment with which Aylva was defending the entrance into Friesland. The magistrates of Zwolle had now no difficulty in forcing the inhabitants to surrender the town. To relieve themselves of all responsibility towards the States-General, they made the precipitate departure of the garrison an excuse for the capitulation which they had previously decided upon.

Their understanding with the enemy was so fully concerted that they had despatched a messenger with a circular in which the secretary of the States of Overijssel, Rocklinck, usurping the authority that belonged to that assembly, invited all the towns of the province to make their submission. The colonels, in their retreat, intercepted the letter addressed to the magistrates of Steenwick, and thus obtained proof of the plot. All the towns hastened to respond to this appeal by sending deputies to Zwolle, with full powers to acknowledge the supremacy of the enemy, under the same conditions as had been offered to the inhabitants of Deventer.

By the following day every town in the province except the fortress of Ommen had acknowledged the sovereignty of the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster. Van Arkel, commandant of that town, and his officers, though they had only 200 men under them, were prepared to take advantage of the favourable situation of the fortress to defend themselves to the last extremity; but their soldiers, on hearing that the other towns had surrendered, mutinied and demanded to be allowed to leave the fort. The flag, which they wished to take with them, was saved from them only with great difficulty, and the

officers, forced to take flight in all haste, withdrew to Friesland, with the exception of the commandant, who remained a prisoner.

In order to obtain formal possession of the province, the Bishop of Münster, who wished to keep it for himself, had commissioned two negotiators to treat with the nobles who represented the country districts. His overtures were favourably received, and the nobles referred the question to a committee, of which Rocklinck was made a member. The question of separating Overijssel from the United Provinces being put before them, they gave their consent, after obtaining the guarantees promised them for the exercise of the reformed religion, the payment of the debts of the province and the levy of taxes, but without being able to obtain the preservation of their private rights of jurisdiction. Notwithstanding the refusal of some of the members of the nobility, the treaty was concluded accordingly with the reservation that it should not be made public.

The King of France, however, would not allow it to be carried out. He reserved to himself the division of the conquered province, in spite of the discontent of the Bishop of Münster, whose demands and exactions had worn out his patience, and put a garrison of his own into Hassen, as well as into Kampen, which gave him access to the Zuyder Zee. He restored Deventer to the Elector of Cologne, left Zwolle in common to the two princes, and only bestowed on the Bishop of Münster Groll and Breevort, adding as compensation a diamond cross worth 25,000 crowns. He would only promise the Bishop to abandon to him the other towns which he already occupied or might conquer before the end of the campaign. The parcelling out of Overijssel between several masters made the fate of that province still more lamentable. Fearing that he would not long retain his new subjects under his dominion, and having no interest, therefore, in showing them any consideration, the Bishop of Münster made them his victims. The emigration of the inhabitants, driven to escape by exile from oppression, spread consternation and despair in Holland. 'We fancied we were dreaming,' writes a contemporary, 'when we learnt that an entire province had been taken from us at one stroke as if

by a secret plot, and that the allies of the King of France, from whom we feared the least, were sharing his good fortune. On all sides were to be seen terrified people, crying out in utter despair, "There is nothing but treachery; we are sold; on the first opportunity we shall be given up."

The conquests of the King of France had not slackened. Turenne still remained to carry them on, in default of Condé, who, reduced to inaction by his wound, had been moved to Arnheim and subsequently returned to his estate of Chantilly to complete his cure there. His command was given to Turenne; though out of regard for his services and his birth, the King left it nominally in the hands of his son, the Duke d'Enghien, transferring the latter, however, to the Duke of Orleans' division, of which he himself resumed the command. While returning to the head-quarters, which had been transferred to Emmerich, in order to superintend personally all the supplies of provisions and then to proceed to the Yssel, he directed Turenne to pursue the enemy. To carry out his instructions, Turenne, the day after the passage of the Rhine, despatched Count de Guiche in advance, and started to rejoin him with a portion of his forces, leaving his rear-guard under the command of his principal lieutenant, Saint Abre. He feared that the Prince of Orange might attempt the bold stroke of re-entering the island of Betuwe by means of the bridge of boats at Arnheim, in order to oppose the invasion step by step, and with this idea he had sent Count de Guiche in all haste to bar his passage. Instead of making use of the bridge of boats for the purpose of advancing, the Prince of Orange had hastened to destroy it, to prevent the French army following him up in his retreat. Having arrived in sight of Arnheim without encountering any resistance, Count de Guiche, instead of being forced to fight the enemy, had nothing to do but to watch their movements; he sent out a detachment of cavalry to reconnoitre, which forded the Leck below the town, and engaged in a skirmish with the rear-guard of the army of the States.

On the approach of one of Turenne's divisions, the inhabitants of Arnheim appeared disposed to defend themselves.

The garrison, which consisted of at least 2,000 men and had at its disposal a large number of guns, was capable of sustaining a siege. The guns on the ramparts were pointed, and the only shot fired carried off Major-General Count de Plessis Praslin, son of Field-Marshal the Duke de Choiseul. Scarcely had Turenne set up two bridges of boats for the transport of his troops, when the inhabitants and soldiers, thinking it now useless to defend themselves, refused to serve any longer. Negotiations were commenced for the surrender of the town, and this was carried out so hastily that the besiegers made their entry before the capitulation was signed.

Turenne did not wait for Arnheim to surrender before re-joining the detachment commanded by another of his lieutenants, Magalotti, whom he had sent back to the Wahal to take in the rear the fort of Knodsemburg opposite Nimeguen, of which it was the advanced post. The garrison, numbering 300 men, were commanded by a gallant officer, Verschoor, who appeared determined to defend himself to the last extremity. They directed a well-sustained fire on the besiegers, who had easily obtained possession of the counterscarp, and caused them in a few hours the loss of 400 men, 45 being officers, among whom Magalotti was severely wounded. When the ammunition began to fail, the commandant of the fort sent notice to the governor of Nimeguen by his brother, who swam across the Wahal to ask for the needful reinforcements. The governor delayed their despatch, and only at the last extremity permitted a detachment of 600 men to embark; and meanwhile a false signal disconcerted the projects for defence. While the firing was still continuing a parley was, either from a misunderstanding or treachery, suddenly sounded. The garrison, already discontented at not having received earlier assistance, thought themselves abandoned, and, in spite of the efforts made by the commandant to check the confusion, they hastened to the ramparts to ask for quarter. In vain did the commandant attempt with the aid of his officers to recall them to obedience; they forced him to send deputies to the French camp, who succeeded at least in concluding an advantageous capitulation. They refused to

consent to the garrison being made prisoners, and on announcing the determination come to by the officers to set fire to the powder if favourable conditions were refused, obtained for them liberty to withdraw to Groningen with arms and baggage.

Once master of Knodseburg, Turenne could overawe the garrison of Nimeguen, and, before commencing the siege of that town, he retraced his steps for the purpose of taking possession of Schenck. The fortress of Schenck, situated at the point of the island of Betuwe at the junction of the Rhine and the Wahal, commanded the course of those two rivers, and could intercept the trains of provisions forwarded to the enemy. Its situation made it easy to defend, notwithstanding the bad condition of the fortifications. Supplied with munitions of war and garrisoned by 1,800 men, it could offer prolonged resistance to any attack. It had resisted for nine months the Stadtholder Frederick Henry in the war with Spain; but it only held out for eight hours against the French troops. The command had been bestowed upon a young man named Ten Hove, scarcely twenty-two years old, who was not yet a captain, and for whom his father, burgo-master of Nimeguen and one of the judges of Guelders, had obtained this post, which he was quite unfitted to hold. As presumptuous as he was inexperienced, the young governor had sworn 'to defend himself to his last drop of blood.' But disregarding the advice given him, he began by sending away the armed frigates on the Wahal, which might have prevented the enemy crossing the river where the fortifications were weakest. Moreover, under pretext that he had not sufficient troops to occupy all the posts, without consulting the Council of War he gave orders to demolish some advanced works which Major-General Wurtz had constructed. Turenne immediately on arriving in front of the town perceived this mistake and took advantage of it; pushing forward his trenches so rapidly that the terrified garrison begged for three hours to quit the town. Turenne only granted them one, and they capitulated without having lost a single man. The governor, overwhelmed with shame and assailed on all sides by reproaches of treachery, departed to die sword in hand

in the town of Coeverden during its siege by the Bishop of Münster.

At the same time that he himself was marching towards Schenck, Turenne, in order to complete the subjection of the country, detached from his main body another advanced guard of 500 men, under the command of his nephew, Count de Lorge, and sent it to occupy the right bank of the Wahal, on the very frontier of Holland. Count de Lorge had only to show himself, and the gates of all the towns that he found on his march opened to him. The French troops, meeting no resistance, advanced within sight of Voorn and Saint André, which, notwithstanding their favourable position on small islands formed by the junction of the Wahal and the Meuse, did not even wait to be attacked before surrendering. Nimeguen was thus surrounded on all sides, and Turenne, having prevented the town receiving any assistance, could commence the siege with the most perfect security. He had only to take possession of it in order to break down the last rampart of resistance and thus complete the isolation of Holland.

Louis XIV. had reserved for himself the subjection of that province, which would have placed the republic at his mercy. But a delay of a few days sufficed to deprive him of his conquest. Before undertaking it he determined to proceed to the Yssel, which he had constituted the chief aim of his military operations, proposing there to overtake and destroy the army of the States. The hasty retreat of the Prince of Orange on Utrecht did not produce any alteration in the course which the King of France had decided upon. Before pursuing him he desired, out of love of glory as well as from excess of precaution, to obtain possession of the fortresses on the Yssel, and to complete thus the war of sieges in which he had lately won renown. Accompanied by Vauban, who made him master of every town he besieged, he started from Emmerich on June 16, crossed without any difficulty the river, which was undefended, and while his brother, the Duke of Orleans, was marching on Zutphen, sat down before Doesburg. This town, in spite of its garrison of 3,500 men, only allowed the siege to be begun in order to gain time for capitulation. 'The magis-

trates were inclined to run away,' writes Beverningh, 'and it was hopeless to induce them to resist.' The commandant of the town, Cors, an officer of Scotch origin, was loyal but wanting in energy. The defence was limited to a few discharges of artillery and two infantry sorties, in which four captains of the Swiss regiment lost their lives. The most disastrous event on the side of the besiegers was the death of Martinet, who commanded the King's regiment, and who had carried out in the French infantry the new organisation of which Louvois had drawn up the plan; he himself and two of his aides-de-camp were the victims of the misdirected fire of a French battery. The siege was not of long duration. The King of France ordered fascines to be brought, and gave instructions that the trenches which had been opened in the night should be continued in broad day, and the capitulation was signed without any further effort of resistance being ventured upon by the burgomaster or the garrison.

The town of Zutphen, which was defended by 2,500 soldiers besides five companies of burghers, yielded less readily, but could not escape the fate of the other conquered towns. The want of courage of the magistrates baffled the good intentions of the governor, Swartenburg, and made useless the valour of the inhabitants. A general assembly of the delegates of the nobles and burghers was convoked. Notwithstanding the eager remonstrances of one of the nobles, Schimmelpenning, the party of submission gained all the votes; but the officers of the companies hastened to protest against this deliberation. One of them, John Coulman, distinguished himself in particular by his courageous obstinacy. In response to his appeal, the companies took steps to arrest the negotiators commissioned to surrender to the King of France, and threatened them with a traitor's death if they ventured to leave the town. Informed of these internal divisions, so favourable to his cause, Louis XIV. pushed on the attack with the artillery reinforcements sent by the Bishop of Münster. The French troops were, however, valiantly repulsed for four days, but the disaffection of the magistrates, on whom the governor was unable to impose his authority, disheartened

the soldiers, who complained of being neither paid nor fed, and the burgher companies could not suffice for the defence. The Duke of Orleans received the magistrates of the town, and insisted that the garrison should surrender themselves prisoners of war; he, however, took into consideration the conditions offered by the King of France, granting the free exercise of the reformed religion, and the preservation to the magistrates of their municipal functions, a sorry recompense for the services they had rendered him.

Though Louis had hitherto been everywhere successful, his very successes were preparing for him an unexpected danger. Convinced that the United Provinces could now offer him no resistance, he thought it unnecessary to concentrate his troops, in order to complete without delay the work of conquest, by hastening on the invasion of Holland. He preferred to insure as far as possible the formal possession of the country, by leaving no fortified place behind him in possession of the enemy, and by putting garrisons into all the conquered towns, to the number of twenty-five or thirty. According to the evidence of contemporary authors, in default of any authentic document, it was Louvois who contributed to induce Louis XIV. to adopt this fatal course. The paltry notion that has been attributed to him, of wishing to make tools for himself by appointing military commandants to all the occupied towns, cannot, in the absence of any proof, be laid to his charge. The most likely motive for his conduct is the idea he had conceived of shutting off thus, as if by a new military circle, all access to the intervention of the Elector of Brandenburg and the Emperor of Germany. Moreover, this dissemination of the forces still left at the disposal of the King of France a corps of operation of 40,000 men, which even at the conclusion of the campaign was never reduced to less than 20,000 or 23,000, and which ought assuredly to have sufficed for the conquest of Holland if Louis had been prompt in making use of it.

It was not for want of advice that the King of France failed to give a final blow to the enemy. Condé, kept by his wound at a distance from the scene of action, but always bold in

his inspirations, would have desired to hasten the attack. He heard on his bed at Chantilly of the success of the French army, and was always asking whether the King was at Amsterdam. 'I heard the Prince say,' writes Pellisson, 'that if he had had at his disposal a very large body of artillery, the enemy having very little, he would have made himself master of the roads that protected the approach to Holland, and that by attacking them all at once by the dykes leading to them, the enemy being too weak to defend them all, he would have succeeded in seizing some of them.' If the project failed, it was because Condé was not able to carry it into execution.

Another enterprise, which only required a bold stroke to be successful, was also suggested to Louis XIV. Availing himself of his geographical acquaintance with a country in which he had long resided as ambassador, Count d'Estrades, as impatient as the Prince de Condé, advised the King of France to pursue the enemy without intermission. It was necessary, in his opinion, that Louis should hasten to deprive them of their last resource, that of inundations, by taking possession of Muiden, which would place in his hands the principal sluices in the country; and that he should at the same time make himself master of Woerden by advancing as far as Leyden, so as to have Holland at his mercy. But this letter, which was sent on June 18 from Wesel, the command of which had been conferred on Count d'Estrades, having first been submitted for approbation to Pomponne, could not reach Louis XIV. on the same day, he having already arrived before Doesburg. By the time it was communicated to the King of France defensive measures had already been taken in Holland, and no longer permitted the success of the attempt which D'Estrades hoped 'would have been the finest campaign ever carried out.'

Chance, however, had nearly caused it to succeed. On the very day on which Count d'Estrades was pointing out the plan of campaign which the King of France ought to have followed, Louis XIV. had already despatched an advanced guard, under the command of Lieutenant-General the Marquis de Rochefort. But he had only given him an inadequate number of troops,

and the instructions he desired him to carry out were not those which had just been suggested by D'Estrades. The Marquis de Rochefort set out with 3,000 horse and 6,000 dragoons; he was only commissioned to watch over and annoy the retreat of the Prince of Orange on Utrecht, by cutting off his communications with the Zuyder Zee. The fortified towns that he came across on his road, far from resisting him, sent deputies to offer him their submission, and on arriving at Amersfort he informed Louis XIV. that Utrecht had been abandoned. Having carried out the orders he had received, he was desired to enter that town, which he occupied with his troops, on whom he enforced the strictest discipline. 'The work is so easy here,' he writes, 'that only boldness is wanted to insure success.'

He might, indeed, by a bold stroke have terminated the campaign if the reconnaissance he had attempted in the neighbourhood of Amsterdam had been more successfully carried out; but it had not been put before him as the chief aim of his expedition, and he does not appear to have considered it of much importance. A squadron of 150 dragoons, commanded by M. de Rannes, was detached from his advanced guard, with no preconcerted plan. He contented himself with sending it to observe the advanced posts of Amsterdam, without thinking it necessary to occupy them. In spite of its numerical weakness, this small detachment was nearly endangering the safety of Amsterdam. The approaches to the town beyond a very restricted circle had remained but imperfectly defended, and the confusion consequent on the retreat of the army had prevented this negligence being repaired. Naarden, which commanded the approach to Amsterdam by its favourable situation on the Zuyder Zee, had been left without a commandant and was given up by the burgomasters. The garrison, who had not been informed of the capitulation, escaped with difficulty, the French cavalry pursuing them and making eighty prisoners.

'If I can obtain another fifty horse, I can as easily take two or three towns,' writes the commander of the detachment. Some of the scouts advanced to within two leagues of

Amsterdam, as far as Muyden, which might be considered as one of the keys of the town, because it opened a way to the dyke leading to it. Muyden had been abandoned by its magistrates and inhabitants, and was a prey to anyone who chose to occupy it. According to an account accredited by some contemporary historians, four French dragoons who had entered the town were shut up by a maid-servant in the castle, into which they had penetrated, and of which she raised the drawbridge. 'Our envoy,' write the magistrates of Amsterdam to the deputies of that town to the States, 'found nobody left in Muyden, with the exception of two or three Frenchmen.' The delay, however, was but short. On the same day, Prince John Maurice of Nassau was in possession of the town with a division of the army of the States, numbering about 2,000 men, and had insured himself against any attack. 'The enemy perceiving our troops, retreated,' he writes; 'and we drove them back as far as Naarden.' By midday on June 20 the magistrates of Amsterdam were informed of his arrival, which prevented all possibility of a sudden attack being carried out, even if it had been seriously attempted.

Once master of Muyden, the Prince of Nassau could not fail to attach the greatest importance to the possession of Naarden, and was of course impatient to retake it; but a French garrison of 600 dragoons and eleven companies of infantry had just been sent into the town, within reach of the 3,000 men who occupied Amersfort, and when it is remembered that the first detachment sent out to reconnoitre only numbered 150 dragoons, we may be allowed to believe that it was the letter written by Count d'Estrades to Louis XIV. which had caused these reinforcements to be so promptly sent. Happily for Holland, Muyden was saved, and by the time the enemy's troops were assembled in sufficient numbers to take possession of it, the position it was so much for their interest to seize was beyond their reach. Later, all the strength of the attack was put forth against it in vain, the line of defence guarded by the remnant of the army of the States-General remained intact and insured to the republic an entrenched position rendered impregnable by the inundations.

Louis XIV. was none the less confident that he already had at his mercy all the country that still remained unconquered, and whose easy subjection was promised him by Turenne. Before advancing to take possession of it, he published a proclamation in which he promised to use indulgence towards the towns which should open to him their gates, and threatened to treat without mercy those that attempted resistance. He considered that he had no longer enemies to fight against, but only rebels to subdue. The deputation just sent by the States of Utrecht to Doesburg, where he was still encamped, encouraged his presumption. It consisted of three members of their assembly, Tuyl de Seroskerke de Wallant, president of the States, Jacob van der Does de Berkestein, and Van der Voorst, burgomaster of the town. Louis offered them conditions which they had hardly hoped to obtain: he guaranteed to them the preservation of all their privileges, with free exercise of the reformed religion, and added the promise that their province should not be separated from the confederation of the United Provinces, but should be comprised in the articles of the treaty of peace that he would grant to the republic.

In order to carry on more readily the negotiations which had been entered into with the States-General, the King of France advanced towards Utrecht and established his headquarters at the castle of Zeyst, the property of Odyk, the favourite of the Prince of Orange. He subsequently made his solemn entry into the town at the head of nine or ten thousand men, amongst whom were the picked troops consisting of twenty-two companies of the regiment of French Guards and two companies of the body-guard. His brother, the Duke of Orleans, and Monmouth, natural son of Charles II., escorted him in the midst of a splendid train; the presence of the English Prince, who had brought a regiment with him, was a public manifestation of the indissoluble alliance of the two Kings. The Catholic population appeared for the first time disposed to give the King of France a cordial reception. Hitherto, in spite of D'Estrades' predictions, and notwithstanding the inferiority to which they were reduced by the system of tolerance

that was all they could lay claim to, they had nowhere pronounced in favour of the enemy. But at Utrecht they at least took part in the religious rejoicings with which the solemn restoration of their worship was celebrated in the cathedral when it was consecrated by Cardinal de Bouillon.

Louis XIV., who was never happy in a large town, did not remain long in Utrecht, and left behind him as governor the Duke of Luxembourg, who spared the inhabitants none of the ills of conquest. He returned to Zeyst and there waited till the time should arrive for him to impose his will on the vanquished. His confidence was shared by those around him, and appeared to be well founded. 'I hope,' writes Louvois to Letellier, 'that we shall know without further delay what to expect from our neighbours, and, unless I am much mistaken, they will sign everything that is asked of them.'

* The passage of the Rhine, the victorious entry of the French army into Betuwe, which had, so to speak, disappeared beneath the flood of invasion, its rapid progress into Weluwe, which had enabled Louis XIV. to advance as far as Utrecht, while advanced detachments were sent to the Zuyder Zee, and the rapid conquests of the Bishop of Münster on the other side of the Yssel, had broken up the republic of the United Provinces; it resembled a chess-board on which all the pieces are separated and cannot assist one another. The Country of the Generality and the three provinces of Guelders, Utrecht, and Overijssel, were already in the enemy's power; Friesland and Groningen, being isolated, seemed unable to escape the same fate, Zealand was surrounded, while Holland, in which the Confederation still retained a feeble remnant of life, seemed herself to be attacked with mortal weakness. Her inhabitants no longer felt themselves safe within her borders. The wealthier families were beginning to send away their women and children, and to place their treasures in safety elsewhere; most of them buried their riches in cellars and wells. The people had lost their heads. 'The terror was so great,' writes Gourville in his memoirs, 'that the Jews of Amsterdam sent me word that they would give two millions to the Prince of Condé if he would save their quarter.' Public credit was

exhausted at the fountain head. The provincial bonds, which had been at a premium of 100 per cent., were now with difficulty negotiated at 30 per cent.; the shares of the East India Company, which had easily found purchasers at 572 florins, and of the market price of which Condé, who was a keen speculator, took care to be well informed, were being offered at 250 florins, and the bank-paper, for which public confidence had given as much as four or five per cent. more than for coin, had sunk to four or five per cent. below it. 'Everyone,' writes Valkenier, a contemporary author, 'seemed to be under sentence of death, trade was at a standstill, the shops were shut, the sittings of the courts of justice closed, the academies and schools taking holiday. On the other hand, the churches were too small to contain the numbers that came to pray to God for the safety of the republic. It was said that the government had no plan, the people no tongue, and the country no hope.' Accusations of treachery scattered in all directions kept up mistrust and spread discouragement.

The first despatches written by the military commanders justify this panic, and show clearly that they would have been unable to maintain their positions if they had been forced to defend them against a sudden attack. On the north of the line of defence Major-General Wurtz and Louvignies, who occupied the posts of Goreum and Schoonhoven, on which depended the safety of Rotterdam and Dordrecht, urgently demanded reinforcements, and General Wurtz declared 'that the fortress of Goreum was lost if he had to repulse the enemy.' On the south, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, who was defending the approaches to Amsterdam at Muyden, was even less confident. The peasants sent to him by the Prince of Orange to be employed on the fortifications had fled during the night. His tired soldiers, to whom he could with difficulty furnish the necessary implements, refused to work with the spade and shovel, although he promised them a florin a day. Their want of discipline went unpunished, and he was forced to ask for a provost-marshal to enable him to restore it. Even war material was wanting. The guns at his disposal were mounted for the most part on gun-carriages about a foot

from the ground. At the risk of exaggerating his complaints, he says that his troops, 'if deprived of more powder and shot, must be butchered,' and he writes to the Prince of Orange with sorrowful resignation: 'Unless we have reinforcements you will have no cause to be surprised if our necks are broken.'

'The great and astonishing progress which my armies had made in so short a time,' writes Louis XIV. in his account of the war with Holland, 'the idea and forebodings of certain ruin and the general overthrow of the republic, the small reliance there was to be placed in a new and depreciated army, commanded by an inexperienced young man, all these sad and hopeless reflections bewildered the Dutch and put them beside themselves.' The Grand Pensionary, on his side, confided to his brother in these terms the uneasiness caused him by the disorder and confusion which he witnessed: 'May God improve the state of affairs here, which grows every day worse! May He preserve us from fresh misfortunes!' At the same time he drew the attention of the States of Holland to the shortcomings of many of the magistrates, who 'have no courage and paralyse all the forces of the government. We shall be the cause of our own ruin,' he declares, 'because we do ourselves more harm than the enemy has done us. If the matter be not looked to, we shall be left without hope or remedy.'

In this extremity an insurmountable barrier to the progress of the French army was offered by the inundations, and the republic was indebted for her safety to this last means of defence. Holland, whose very name means a hollow or low country, can easily be inundated. She is intersected from the Meuse to the Zuyder Zee by a number of rivers, canals, lakes, and gulfs; and the level of the land, which in several places is lower than the rivers, and even below the level of the sea at high tide, obliges the inhabitants to multiply dykes in order to prevent the country being submerged. Raised above the meadows and intersected by ditches, the dykes serve as causeways and take the place of roads. They communicate with one another at intervals by means of sluices, which

enable the water to be let out on to the land, as it rises, and which, closing as it returns, leave the water confined in small basins. Where there are no sluices, or if it is necessary to hasten the inundation, more especially in dry seasons, it suffices to open cuttings in the dykes, in order to submerge the land at high tide, dams being constructed to prevent its being dried up at low tide. The sluices once opened, and the dykes cut, the only thoroughfares that remain accessible are the high causeways, a sort of bridges which are easily destroyed or defended.

From one frontier to the other, Holland can thus call the waters to her aid against invasion, and make use of them as a continuous circle of entrenchments. On the north, it is true, the tide of the Zuyder Zee did not rise high enough to produce an overflow, but an heroic measure might still be taken, that of cutting through the dykes, so as to be able without the help of the sluices to inundate completely, even at low tide, all the land on a lower level than the sea. The steps necessary for making the various parts of Holland inaccessible to invasion had been studied beforehand. The French Government had inquired into the matter, and as early as the year 1670 had tried to obtain information by means of an envoy, whose mission was suspected by the States and who had to be precipitately recalled. The traditions were thus revived of the patriotism which, a century before, in the heroic War of Independence, had saved Leyden by returning to the ocean a part of the land conquered from the sea.

The necessity for having recourse to this plan of defence had not escaped the Grand Pensionary, and he had urged its execution, which the States of Utrecht opposed, as he complained afterwards to Beverningh. At his suggestion the States of Holland had at length, though tardily, sent instructions to all the inspectors of dykes, enjoining them to draw up a report speedily, in concert with the deputies of the towns whose consent was to be first obtained. Numerous debates set before us with the most precise details the mode in which the inundation was to be prepared in each district; they show that, by the end of the month of April, the most necessary works were

everywhere begun, from North Holland as far as Brabant, and that they were being pushed forward with the greatest activity, in the direction of Brabant, along the Wabal and the Meuse, upon the entire line on which the States-General expected to be attacked.

On the news of the enemy's approach, the Grand Pensionary hastened to put into execution the final decisions which had hitherto remained in suspense. In the beginning of June the deputies of Haarlem, Leyden, Amsterdam, Gouda, Schoonhoven, Alkmaar, Hoorn, and Enckhuyzen, were commissioned to give an account to the Assembly of the States of the measures that were to be taken for flooding the country by raising the sluices or cutting the dykes. On their report the most minute and urgent instructions were given to the magistrates of the towns, at the request of the Grand Pensionary, and the former received orders, the day after the passage of the Rhine, to hasten on the inundations. A sum of 50,000 florins was placed at their disposal to provide the necessary means.

It was Amsterdam that responded with the greatest eagerness to this final appeal, and which was the first to give the signal for the patriotic measures without which the republic would have been lost. The magistrates of the town had at first hesitated; instead of submerging the country they let it be understood that in the event of the States proceeding to inundate the approaches to the town, they would oppose them by every means in their power. The authentic report of the sitting of the Council sets forth the resistance which they persisted in maintaining.

The Council say that they cannot understand how the deputies of Amsterdam could allow the States of Holland to adopt the resolution of inundating the environs of the town. The waters can, as has already been done, be kept up and ready to overflow, if necessary; but they have not yet arrived at the extremity of flooding the country, to the great prejudice of the inhabitants and of the fields, at the moment when the hay is still standing, and the corn cannot yet be cut. The cattle left without food will die; the people will be unable to pay their taxes, and the waters becoming stagnant during the heat will

cause the plague and other diseases. It is observed that the enemy has as yet only taken the frontier towns, and the burgomasters are authorised to suspend the execution of the resolution of the States, by stopping the cutting of the dykes. A report was read from Geelvinck, deputy of the town to the States, saying that he accepted the post of commissioner for the inundations, and representing the necessity of flooding the country in consequence of the imminent danger, the enemy being within eight days of the gates of Amsterdam. Sharp words were exchanged; surprise was expressed that Geelvinck should have lost all confidence. Some members of the Council wished him to be sent for to give explanations of his conduct.

Two days later the Council of Amsterdam, having heard of the passage of the Rhine, were forced to acknowledge that the fears which they had thought exaggerated were now only too well justified. They therefore decided to commence by coming to an agreement with the deputies of Gouda, for the purpose of raising the waters of the Lake of Haarlem to their highest level. In the evening sitting the energetic appeal of the burgomaster Hœuft, and the high bailiff Hasselaar, whose son had been killed in the battle of Solebay, was loyally re-echoed. The committee of burgomasters and former burgomasters, consisting of twelve members, 'considering that inundation was less fatal than invasion,' sent word to the commissioners of the States that they left them full powers.

Next morning the policy of temporisation appeared, it is true, to prevail, and the burgomasters declared that they could not take so desperate a measure without consulting the sheriffs and councillors assembled together to the number of thirty. But the following day their final hesitation was overcome, and a definite consent given. The burgomaster, Van de Pol, made known the resolution come to by the States two days previously; it was peremptory, and directed that the waters should be let in, as the only chance of safety for Holland. The burgomasters, having decided at first to send for the councillors, acknowledged on the urgent representations of the former burgomaster, Valkenier, that their advice must be dispensed with, because any adjournment, even of a few

hours, might have the most fatal consequences. It was decided, as is set forth in the memorable report of the sitting of June 15, that the sluices should be opened and the dykes cut.

The orders were signed by those of the burgomasters in office who were present, Van de Pol, Outshoven, and Rynst. The Town Council, in full assembly, at length approved them, after stormy sittings, in one of which the former burgomaster, Vlooswyck, attacked the deputy Geelvinck, whom he held responsible for the resolution of the States. Orders were issued to destroy the buildings and gardens contiguous to the ramparts, which might have served as shelter to the assailants. The mills were only spared on the promise of the millers to set fire to them themselves as soon as the approach of the enemy should be notified. Three days later the entry of the waters was suspended, the inundation having, according to the report of the sittings of the Council, produced what was to be expected of it. The great sacrifice was consummated. The waters poured over the meadows in all directions and drowned the crops; the country houses which were the real homes of the rich burghers of Amsterdam, who usually had no residence in their town except their counting-houses and shops, were overwhelmed by the waters, or pulled down and converted into entrenchments. Everything disappeared: plants, hothouses, and exotic gardens, with the collections of all sorts which adorned them. The estates belonging to the magistrates of the town were submerged in order to induce the poorer inhabitants to support more easily the losses they were obliged to endure. 'The surrounding country being inundated,' writes Charles II.'s minister, Arlington, 'Amsterdam remains as a shelter for the States.'

At the same time the magistrates shrank from no expense, and generously contributed 700,000 florins from the treasury of the town. The works of fortification carried out by the most skilful engineers completed the security of the defence. The ramparts were protected by twenty-six bastions furnished with cannon; six regiments of burghers, each consisting of ten companies, were under arms; the representatives of the oldest Dutch families, Hasselaar, Witsen, Hœuft, and Bicker, com-

manded them. Fourteen companies of militia had been enrolled, 1,600 sailors from the fleet were employed in defending the dykes. More than 12,000 men, under the command of Colonel van Beveren, were thus assembled by the end of June within the walls of the town. Protected besides towards the sea by the frigates, which intercepted the entrance to the Zuyder Zee, and by the armed flotilla which occupied the gulf of the Y, under the command of Lobs, councillor-deputy of Holland, assisted by Bontemantel, one of the sheriffs of the town, Amsterdam was soon placed in a position which defied all attack, and might be considered as impregnable.

It required nothing less than this powerful and generous example to overcome the resistance offered to the inundations by the inhabitants of the country districts, who preferred the preservation of their fields to the safety of their fatherland. The rising of the peasants, who, instead of labouring at the works for which they were requisitioned, opposed them by force of arms, with the more or less avowed complicity of the local governments and of some of the town councils, rendered useless the energetic intervention of the commissioners of the States, Vivien, De Zwynrecht, brother-in-law of John de Witt, Van Arkel, Ruyl, and Meerman. This resistance prevented the progress of the enemy being arrested in time, and made it necessary to draw back the line of defence behind Woerden as far as Nieuverburg. 'Notwithstanding all we are able to do for the inflow of the waters,' writes De Witt to his brother, 'the work still remains in suspense, and will only be carried through by force.'

This the States no longer hesitated to employ. They despatched companies of cavalry to disperse and arrest the peasantry. At the same time they wrote to the Prince of Orange desiring him to set them to work by force if necessary, and urged on the commissioners to employ soldiers in default of the peasants, without heeding any remonstrances. All obstacles were soon surmounted, and in every direction the open sluices and broken-down dykes transformed the plains into marshes. The inundation, commenced on June 15, was nearly completed by the 20th. Holland was to remain

submerged for the next two years, assailable only in winter during the frosts, and at other times all but inaccessible, being, so to speak, buried beneath the waters. Such was the price she paid for her deliverance.

During these melancholy days, the States of Holland showed no signs of weakness, and won honour by their patriotic conduct. The very day after the passage of the Rhine, on hearing the disastrous news by a letter from the burgomaster of Nimeguen, they had courageously resolved, after the first expressions of dismay recorded in the report of their deliberations, to overcome their ill-fortune. The difficulties of their task neither disheartened them nor drove them to despair; and the Grand Pensionary, whose untiring assistance never failed them, incited them to the most efficacious measures for defence. 'God Almighty has means of helping us,' he writes to Beverningh, 'if only the vanquished will take courage once more—*donec redeat victis in præcordia virtus.*' In the speech made by him to the States, a summary of which has been preserved in the manuscript of a member of the Assembly, he pointed out the danger with bold frankness, and urged them to offer indomitable resistance to the invasion. Anxious to provide at any price an asylum for the independence of the United Provinces, and fearing that it would not be possible to place the Hague beyond the reach of invasion, he begged them to seek refuge in Amsterdam, taking with them money, artillery, and supplies, and assembling there the deputies of the provinces, to make it, with the consent of the magistrates of the town, the seat of public authority. He reminded them that the defence of Copenhagen had been the means of saving the kingdom of Denmark from the conquest of the King of Sweden, and advised them to take advantage of the resources that were to be found in a large, well-fortified, and well-supplied town, to which all that might be wanting could be brought by sea. 'If these were extreme remedies,' he declared, 'they were demanded by the extremity which threatened the republic.'

Surprised by this proposal, the deputies of Holland at first received it with hesitation, and waited some days before com-

municating it to the States-General. Encouraged by the declarations of the foreign ambassadors, who announced their intention of following them to Amsterdam, they despatched thither the stores contained in their arsenals as well as the public treasure, giving the necessary instructions to their receiver-general, Pauw, and directing him to concert with the treasurer-general of the Confederation, Conrad Burg. The Council of Amsterdam expressed themselves eagerly in favour of this project, and stated their opinion in this proudly laconic phrase: 'The Council consider it well to give effect to this resolution, not doubting that the assemblies of the country being here, measures of defence will be properly carried out.' The steps taken to arrest the enemy on the frontiers of Holland proved sufficient, however, to guarantee the Hague against any surprise, and the inundations enabled the government of the republic to wait in safety for better times.

It was to the States of Holland that belonged the duty of providing for the defence of their province against invasion. The States-General seemed to have thrown off the responsibility when they recalled the deputies who represented them with the army. Only Beverningh remained accredited to the Prince of Orange, in accordance with the new commission given him by the States of Holland, on whom had now devolved the exercise of the federal power for all measures of defence. They caused the commandants of the different detachments that guarded the approach to their territory to be assisted by commissioners charged with the execution of all orders for the troops, and delegated to four deputies of their Assembly full powers 'in all that concerned the protection of the province.' They responded thus to the appeal addressed to them by the commissioners of the States-General, summoning them to demand from the deputies of all the towns of Holland a promise that they would stand by one another to the very last man. To carry out loyally these instructions, they recalled all the members of their Assembly who were absent, and some days later enjoined on all magistrates who, yielding to panic, had abandoned the frontier towns of the

province, to return without delay under pain of severe punishment.

The States of Holland were equally anxious to restore military discipline. They brought to trial the officers belonging to the regiments of the provincial contingent who had surrendered the strong places on the Rhine, caused Colonel Daniel d'Osory, commandant of Rhyneberg, to be arrested, and vied in severity with the States-General, who had ordered proceedings to be taken against Montbas, thus showing that they did not intend to leave either treachery or weakness unpunished. Eager also to provide supplies for the army, they made requisitions on the towns for wheelbarrows, shovels, and pickaxes for the works of fortification, sent 500 muskets and 500 gun-barrels to the Prince of Orange, gave orders through Valkenier, one of the deputies of Amsterdam, that the manufacture of powder should be carried on day and night in the mills of the town, withdrew 50,000 pounds from their ships, and requested the Admiralty of Amsterdam to furnish them with an advance of 60,000.

While the Prince of Orange by the firmness of his discipline was obliging the cavalry regiments which he had brought back to Holland to perform the service of foot soldiers, hasty levies were filling up the gaps left in the army by the dispersion of the troops sent into garrison after the passage of the Rhine. The States of Holland, not satisfied with completing the last levy of 22,000 men decided upon immediately after war broke out, and which had already furnished several regiments, determined, in addition, to send half the population to join the army, by a forced levy of one man in every two. Fearing the resistance so severe a conscription was certain to provoke, they contented themselves with taking from the regiments of peasants one man in four every week for duty, and consented to employ the burgher companies only in garrisoning the towns or the coast, provided the towns would furnish at their own expense, as compensation, fresh companies of militia for service in the field. They repeated, though vainly, the order to the garrison of Maestricht to return, enjoining them to proceed towards

Antwerp; but they could not succeed in making their way out of the blockaded fortress. They took into the service of Holland the regiments of Guelders and Utrecht which had been brought back to their territory after the retreat of the army, and which could no longer obtain their pay from the invaded provinces.

The naval forces placed at their disposal by the States-General, under the direction of three commissioners, were still more useful. The States of Holland hastened to avail themselves of these by recalling the 2,000 marines who formed the two regiments in the pay of their province, under the command of the gallant Colonels Palm and Weede van Walenburgh. They brought on shore some of the gunners of the fleet, and sent them to serve in the army, with detachments of sailors commanded by such valiant captains as Engel de Ruyter, son of the Admiral, and Van Brakel. To complete their precautions for defence, they detached important reinforcements of peasants and burghers, to the number of 169 companies, to guard the coasts of the North Sea and the Zuyder Zee, under the command of Lieutenant-General van Velderen, who had established his head-quarters at the Helder. At the same time numerous sloops, armed with guns, intercepted the mouths of the rivers; protected along its entire length the line of defence resting on the Meuse, the Wahal, the Leek, the Amstel, and the Zuyder Zee; and prevented the enemy's troops advancing in boats over the inundated country. By water as well as by land the passage was thus closed to invasion. The safety of the republic, of which the Prince of Orange was to reap the glory, had thus been promptly and efficaciously provided for by the States of Holland under the advice and direction of their Grand Pensionary. If the honour of completing this great work was not theirs, the merit belongs none the less to them, and it was their First Minister who ought to have obtained the recompense.

Their bold resolutions averted the ruin which appeared inevitable. Encouraged by their assistance, the detachments guarding the frontiers of the province defended the posts which they occupied against all attack. These were the

only passages the overflow of the water still left accessible to the enemy; once placed in a state of defence they served as fortresses. The few days' respite imprudently left to the States by Louis XIV. had sufficed to repair the disasters caused by the invasion.

While Holland was securing her safety by inundations and the other measures taken for resistance, Zealand was successfully repulsing an attempt at aggression, and placing herself beyond the reach of conquest. Before entering the territory of the United Provinces, Louis XIV., taking advantage of the advanced posts which the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had given him in the Netherlands, had left a corps of observation in Flanders, under the command of Nanéré, to watch the movements of the Spanish troops in the Netherlands. Towards the end of June, Nanéré received orders to rejoin Count Chamilly, who had remained in the neighbourhood of Maestricht and was demanding reinforcements in order to subdue Dutch Brabant. As he was on the point of starting he was informed that the fortress of Aardenburg, which commanded the important stronghold of Sluys and gave access to Zealand, was without a governor and almost undefended. Confiding in the protection of the Spanish territory which covered the fortress, the States-General, to whom it directly belonged as a part of the Country of the Generality, had only left in it nine small guns, and a garrison of forty men commanded by Ensign Elias Beekman.

Without informing Count Chamilly, Nanéré immediately conceived the idea of commencing the conquest of Zealand, by obtaining possession of Aardenburg. At the head of 5,000 men he marched through the Spanish territory without scruple and without meeting any obstacle, crossed the canal between Ghent and Bruges, and advanced upon Aardenburg, persuaded that a fortress nearly destitute of means of defence would surrender almost before the arrival of the French troops. His confidence was cruelly disappointed. The magistrates of Aardenburg, suddenly informed by a letter written from Ghent that a strong column of the enemy was approaching, assembled in all haste to concert with the military commandant as to the

steps to be taken. The position of affairs appeared so desperate that one of the Council proposed to keep open the gates of the fort. But Ensign Beekman indignantly opposed this idea; one of the sheriffs, named Rooman, supported him, and the defence was unanimously agreed upon.

The burghers flew to arms, 165 of them joining themselves to the little garrison, and 200 defenders occupied the ramparts, which were protected by bastions and demi-lunes, though the ditches were in some places fordable. While awaiting the enemy the women and children brought matches, powder, lead, and pieces of iron, with which in default of cannon balls they loaded the guns, and to these they added trunks of trees destined to crush the assailants. Nanéré, having made a rapid march, arrived before Aardenburg as night was falling, with only his advanced guard composed almost entirely of cavalry. After vainly summoning the town to surrender he ordered an assault to be made, hoping to carry it by a sudden attack. The French horsemen dismounted and advanced with their swords in one hand, and fascines in the other with which to fill up the ditch. But the besieged after two hours' fighting forced them to retire with great loss.

Before renewing the attack, Nanéré waited for the arrival of the rest of his troops, who rejoined him in the course of the day. The besieged, on their side, received a first reinforcement, which, though it barely exceeded fifty men, was sufficient to encourage them. As soon as night fell, Nanéré gave the signal for the assault. Four columns threw themselves upon the town, penetrated as far as one of the demi-lunes, which they succeeded in occupying, filled up the shallow ditch with fascines, and advanced towards the principal inclosure. But the fire of the besieged struck down numbers of the assailants; the trunks of trees thrown amongst them broke their ranks, and caused disorder in their midst; while those who reached the ramparts were killed or made prisoners. A second assault had no better success than the first; the French infantry, retreating in confusion and vainly brought back to the attack by the cavalry, offered a compact mass to the fire from the fortress, which opened frequent large gaps in their midst.

Meanwhile, on hearing the noise of the cannonade, Colonel Spindler, who was raising a regiment in the neighbourhood, led a portion of the garrison of the fortress of Sluys to the assistance of Aardenburg, while the captain of a Zealand ship, John Mathuysen, landed 200 of his crew, who charged the enemy and thus placed them between two fires. The besieged issuing from the town took the offensive, and the victory was decided. At break of day Nancreé, disheartened by his losses, withdrew with all speed and retreated upon Ath. He had lost more than five hundred men, amongst whom were fifty officers killed or wounded; and in addition one of his detachments, which had taken up its position in the outer entrenchments of the town, cut off in its retreat by the cannon of the fortress, was forced to lay down its arms. He was not spared reproaches by Louvois. His unsuccessful enterprise had proved that the victor was not invincible, while the courage of the defenders of Aardenburg had aroused the old traditions of the War of Independence. 'Nothing more is wanted for our safety, than that this example should be followed,' proudly writes Peter de Huybert, Pensionary of Zealand, in describing this unhopèd-for success.

The republic of the United Provinces, though at first crushed by the humiliation of her earlier disasters, might still retain hopes of not being overwhelmed. A letter written on the first tidings of the invasion, when the passage of the Rhine seemed to have opened every road into the country, gives a touching proof of patriotism brought to bay but still offering indomitable resistance. It was addressed to the States-General by the Secretary of Embassy at Madrid, Gilbert Mels. 'I write to you with my heart's tears rather than with ink, not out of cowardice or want of courage, but from sharp suffering which pierces my heart and soul on learning that my fellow-countrymen are dragging through the mud the glory they conquered a hundred years ago; I conceal our faults as well as I can, by letting it be known that there has been treachery and inferiority of forces, and I assert that something different will soon be heard of. I say this although for very shame I had rather shrink out of

sight and die a thousand deaths than see the brightness of our State sullied. If you think I could be of any use, I would give you my goods, my life, and the last drop of my blood, to defend my dear country. Although I am not experienced in military matters, I am stout enough to stop a breach, and to defend it to my last breath.' This breach to be stopped had been closed by the inundations, which had transformed Holland into an island surrounded by an inaccessible sea.

The projects of Louis XIV. had thus been abruptly disconcerted. 'His Majesty,' writes Louvois, 'will be able in eight days to send troops to pillage the Hague and the towns of Holland which cannot be inundated in the dry weather we have now.' He little expected to find his victorious march suddenly arrested by an insurmountable obstacle. His ambassador at the court of Vienna, the Chevalier de Gremonville, could not forgive the States of Holland for 'the audacity' with which they had had recourse to this extreme measure for the purpose of resisting conquest. 'If they had not made use of an element as unstable as themselves,' he declared to the Emperor's ministers, 'there is every likelihood that by this time they would be under the yoke; but the obstinate fury of this rabble may be recognised chiefly in the fact that, although they perceive that God is punishing them, instead of humbling themselves they become more exasperated, and prefer to ruin and destroy their country and their subjects, and to expose themselves to the danger of being drowned, rather than submit to so glorious and triumphant a conqueror.' Louis XIV.—to his honour be it said—refrained from giving expression to any such anger, and, however great his disappointment may have been, nobly paid homage to those who had caused it. 'The determination to flood the whole country was certainly rather violent,' he declared in his memoir on the war with Holland, 'but what would not one do to save oneself from foreign domination?'

Still, though the inundations, by checking the progress of # invasion, saved the republic from perishing, she could only be finally delivered by alliances, and negotiations with the enemy. Alliances would secure to her the advantage of a diversion

necessary for her enfranchisement, and negotiations would give her time to wait for assistance from abroad. Immediately on the declaration of war by France and England, the Grand Pensionary had pointed out the imperative necessity for seeking foreign support, and had urgently represented to the States that the allied princes ought to be persuaded to arm themselves without further delay for mutual defence, in consideration of the subsidies granted them for the support of their troops.

Europe was beginning to arouse, and was becoming uneasy at the rapid victories of Louis XIV. and the formidable increase of territory which the conquest of the United Provinces would give to France. 'Jealousy is shown at the great success of the French arms, for which some efficient and real remedy is being sought,' writes one of the correspondents of the States. 'It is hoped that you will be able to withstand the enemy for a few weeks, which will suffice for the hostile army to evaporate into smoke and consume itself.' Temple, who in his voluntary retirement followed anxiously the course of events which he no longer directed, shared the same opinion. He compares Louis XIV. to a skilful swimmer, who throws himself into the water full of ardour and courage, so that no one can tell how far he may not go; 'but,' he adds, 'a strong current, the failure of his strength, or an accident may drive him back.'

To escape from her conqueror, the republic of the United Provinces could not suffice ~~by~~ herself alone; it was from abroad that the boon of deliverance came to her.

Sweden, detached by Louis XIV. from the Triple Alliance and taken as it were into his pay, was beginning to be alarmed; she would willingly have allowed the King of France to humiliate the republic, but she could not permit him to destroy it. She considered that the destruction of the United Provinces would entail that of the entire commerce of the North, and would leave England mistress of the sea. Foreseeing this the States-General, as soon as they received the declaration of war of Louis and Charles, presented a memoir to the Senate, demanding by the terms of the

treaties the assistance of the Swedish Government. The Senate determined to write to Louis XIV. offering their mediation; but they contented themselves for the moment with that proposal, and the ambassador of the States-General, Van Haren, who had remained loyally at his post, could not help fearing 'that the sympathy shown towards the cause of the republic by the Grand Chancellor would not be followed by any more efficient demonstration.'

The United Provinces reckoned with more certainty on the alliance of Denmark, on whose behalf they had intervened in the last war with Sweden. The agreement between France and Sweden disposed Christian V. towards the republic, and his pecuniary differences with the States-General having been submitted to the arbitration of Louis XIV. he gave up the hopes that he might have confidently entertained of a favourable decision on the part of the King of France. Conferences presided over by Schimmelpenning, deputy to the States-General, were therefore held at the Hague, for the purpose of arriving at a mutual agreement. The States-General, not satisfied with the presence at Copenhagen of their resident, Jacob Lemaire, sent Wijngaerden, Lord of Werkendam, one of the principal members of the States of Holland, to represent them there, with instructions to counteract the advances of the French minister, the Chevalier de Terlon, by offers of subsidies which should hasten the despatch of auxiliary troops guaranteed by the treaties of alliance. Werkendam failed to carry out his instructions with the necessary promptitude, and two months after his departure the States of Holland sent him orders to make another urgent appeal to the King of Denmark. The differences between the two States were settled by mutual agreement, and no further obstacle seemed likely to interfere with the convention of military assistance. Werkendam held out hopes that the King of Denmark would be prepared to despatch from Holstein a body of 10,000 men to be added to the troops of the Elector of Brandenburg, and he announced that soldiers came every day to offer their services to the republic; but although the Danish court showed itself favourable to enlistments, it contented itself with

promises, and kept the United Provinces waiting two years longer for an offensive alliance.

The States-General were making efforts to engage Switzerland also on their side, and hurried on their levies in that country. Count Dohna had been selected for this mission in consequence of his connection with the Swiss cantons, as owner of the Barony of Coppet and the estate of Prangeau. He was treated with honour at Berne and received with great pomp at Zurich. The Protestant cantons, by reason of their community of religion, appeared disposed to take up the cause of the States-General, and the preachers of Berne offered up prayers for the Reformed Church of the United Provinces, threatened or persecuted by France. At the same time, the good offices of the Spanish ministers disposed the Catholic cantons in their favour. The officers who were serving in the army of the King of France received orders to take no part in the war against the United Provinces, 'under penalty of losing their heads and their goods.' In vain the regiment of Swiss Guards, which formed a part of the Prince of Condé's division, put forward this prohibition as a reason for refusing to besiege the fortresses of the Rhine, and laid down their arms under pretence of acting in accordance with the capitulations concluded with the Confederation. Condé overcame these scruples by causing the Swiss soldiers to be surrounded by the rest of his troops, and threatening to give them no quarter if they did not set forward. They obeyed, declaring that they only yielded to force.

This violence could not fail to encourage the friendly dispositions of the cantons towards the States; but it required great caution on the part of the latter to overcome their hesitation. In order to obtain levies of soldiers, their resident at Frankfort, Malapert, requested that they should be made quietly and without ostentation. In compliance with his advice also the States delayed the despatch into Switzerland of their envoy, Van Ommeren, whom they had selected so far back as the month of April; and to avoid difficulties, Bruyninck, the minister of the States at Vienna, requested authority from the Emperor to assemble on imperial

territory the soldiers who should be enlisted in the cantons. It was vain to expect that the Diet now assembling at Aaran should encourage these enlistments and consent to take part against the King of France, whose subsidies the cantons were anxious to retain. The Diet restricted itself to remonstrating with Louis XIV. on the subject of the employment of Swiss troops outside the kingdom, without gaining any attention for their complaints.

Fortunately for the United Provinces, Spain had not followed the example of the other States of Europe; notwithstanding all the French King's advances, she had boldly embarked in the defence of the republic. The auxiliary corps which she had placed at the disposal of the States-General proved of great use by enabling them to fortify the advanced posts of Holland with picked troops commanded by experienced and devoted leaders. Moreover, the Spanish court promised shortly to send fresh reinforcements, had ordered more levies, and was completing her maritime armaments, consisting of 35 galleys and 40 ships of war. But military as well as financial resources were wanting to enable her to undertake a war against France. Besides the troops sent to the Netherlands, there were now in Spain only 3,000 foot and 1,500 horse, including the regiment of Guards. Although Spain, therefore, in order to assist the States-General as their ally, made full use of the liberty left her by her treaties with France, as France had made use of them also for the purpose of intervening on behalf of Portugal, she would not consent to a rupture which would have made her ruin inevitable, by drawing upon her the shock of the French invasion. She had saved the United Provinces by helping them to defend themselves; but she could not aid them in taking the offensive.

The States-General had, however, reason to hope that their alliance with the Spanish Government might affect the Emperor of Germany and put an end to the vacillations of his constantly shifting policy. It was true that the conventions entered into in the previous year by Leopold I. with Louis XIV., by which he had engaged to give no assistance to the United Provinces in their war with France, seemed to

oppose an obstacle to any negotiations. But the Emperor had, notwithstanding, reserved to himself the right of maintaining the previous treaties affecting his own security and the defence of Germany. The alliance of the King of France with the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster, the entry of the French troops into their dominions, and finally the treaty concluded between France and Sweden which threatened the Empire with a Swedish invasion, roused Leopold's fears of a renewal of the great struggle that had been ended by the treaty of Westphalia. Under these circumstances he could not conceal from himself the danger of the neutrality which he had promised the King of France, and was no longer inclined to look with indifference on the fate of the United Provinces, but rather considered them as the outworks of the Netherlands and the bulwark of the Empire. The schemes of Louis XIV. gave rise to many alarming suppositions. He was suspected of an intention of having himself elected at Aix-la-Chapelle King of the Romans, in other words, future emperor. A letter from Paris says: 'I have seen a diamond rose that has been made for the king, and which is said to be worth 1,300,000 francs; one stone alone is worth 300,000 francs. There is also a sword-hilt set with crown jewels; all this makes people say that his Majesty has other designs besides those upon Holland.'

The envoy of the States, Hamel Bruyninck, did his best to keep up these alarms. Notwithstanding the cool reception he had met with he had never lost heart, and his intimacy with the Spanish ambassador, the Marquis de Malagon, helped to give force to his representations. He had not waited for the invasion of the United Provinces to offer subsidies for the despatch of a body of Imperial troops to the neighbourhood of the Rhine as soon as the French army had taken the field. This force he considered should consist of 6,000 foot and 6,000 horse, for whose payment the States-General undertook in part to provide. He nearly succeeded in persuading the Court of Vienna to follow the bold counsels of the Grand Pensionary and give orders for the Imperial troops to enter the Electorate of Cologne and effect a junction with the forces of the States

to seize the stronghold of Neuss, which the Elector had fortified and placed at the disposal of Louis XIV.

The active intervention of Baron Lisola, the Emperor's minister at the Hague, who was the avowed and indefatigable diplomatic adversary of Louis, was also of great service to the republic. Encouraged by the confidence placed in him by De Witt, he never ceased to point out in his letters and despatches the dangers which threatened Germany. His lengthy and powerful memorandum of December 30, 1671, in which he urged the necessity of Germany being on its guard against France, had great weight in the deliberations of the Court of Vienna with regard to its policy towards the States-General. He argued that the King of France, having crushed the United Provinces by war, or reduced them to helplessness by the conditions of peace, would not fail to make himself master not only of the Spanish Netherlands, but also of the banks of the Rhine, and would then give the law to the Electoral College. The States ought, therefore, to be saved from sinking in an unequal struggle, which would place the Empire at the mercy of the conqueror. Lisola enumerated all the offences that might be imputed to Louis XIV., and openly attacked his ambitious schemes. He represented at the same time the advantages of a military demonstration, by which the Emperor might profit, to draw closer the alliance with Spain now in league with the United Provinces, and to obtain payment from the States-General for the armaments which Leopold might employ against the Turks, should he have to repel an invasion from that quarter; 'otherwise,' he asserted, 'the Emperor would find himself, sooner or later, standing alone in Europe, and such isolation would hasten the downfall of the Empire.'

This persuasive appeal was successful. A few months later, at the request of the Dutch envoy, Lisola was authorised to open negotiations with the Grand Pensionary, whom from the beginning of their interviews he gave to understand that the Emperor, although he would not yet pledge himself to take up arms against the King of France, might intervene to defend the United Provinces against the aggression of the

Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster. 'The only consideration for Vienna,' he writes in another memorandum, 'is whether war is preferred within the Empire and single-handed, or on the Rhine with the alliance of Spain and the United Provinces.' 'Time,' he adds, 'must not be wasted in deliberations whilst the enemy is acting; the moment has arrived for coming to a conclusion; very soon it will be too late.' By succeeding in convincing the Emperor of the necessity of an armed intervention in favour of the United Provinces, Lisola takes rank among the saviours of the republic. He lived to see its deliverance; dying early in December 1674.

Before making up his mind to such energetic measures, the Emperor was anxious to ascertain the dispositions of the German princes. Although they had been won over by French bribes, they were beginning to be alarmed for the independence of Germany. John George II., Elector of Saxony, who had long been in the pay of Louis XIV., was secretly negotiating with the States-General a loan of a hundred thousand crowns as the price of his assistance, and had become the most ardent champion of a warlike policy. His sons were openly raising levies for the States. The Archbishop Elector of Mayence, whose only object was to save Germany from the scourge of war, did not spare remonstrances to the French envoy, the Marquis de Feuquières, and declared to him 'that if he continued his conquests the King of France might excite suspicion both on account of his excessive power, and of his readiness to make use of it;' and De Feuquières, in his report of the Elector's sentiments, adds: 'It is inconceivable how some people talk about religion and some about German freedom, as if his Majesty had any design upon one or the other, or upon both together, and nobody notices the artifice with which both these drugs are sold in the same shop. One cannot say what effect may be produced in time.'

This change of opinion would not, however, have sufficed to move the Emperor, who, equally from education and character unacquainted with military affairs, had an insuperable dislike to enter into hostilities which he could not direct in person.

Leopold I. would doubtless have confined himself to long-drawn-out negotiations if the Elector of Brandenburg, by taking the initiative, had not in some sort put a forcible end to his hesitations.

Frederick William in fact had just pledged himself by the recently concluded treaty to come to the assistance of the United Provinces with a force of 20,000 men. The States-General were still represented at his court by Amerongen, who continued to serve their cause with devoted fidelity. Louis XIV. so feared his talents as a negotiator that, after the occupation of the town of Utrecht by the French army, he had been recalled, on the demand of the French king, as a subject of that province. But, strong in his attachment to his duties as a minister of the States-General, and fearing to cause the loss of their new ally, he refused to abandon his post, and took no notice of the orders sent to him to return. In vain he argued the justice of his refusal. Threatened with outlawry if he continued in office, he remained undaunted, and, when condemned to pay a crushing war contribution beyond his power to acquit, submitted to the pitiless destruction of his house and the devastation of his woods and gardens with the resignation of a Christian and a patriot. 'I have lost all that I possessed,' he wrote in the following year to the Prince of Orange; 'I retain only an unhappy wife and many innocent little children, who in the future will hardly have bread to eat; but since Almighty God has so willed it I must bear this evil with patience.' He bore without complaint the loss of fortune, and was ready to give his life for his country.

The efforts of a diplomatist who so courageously defended the interests of his country assisted greatly in gaining the Elector of Brandenburg to the cause of the republic. The position that had been given to the Prince of Orange, who, as soon as he was appointed captain-general, began to enter upon his ancestral inheritance, could not fail to encourage his kindly feelings. When thanking the States for his nephew's appointment, the Elector had promised to prove his gratitude towards them. The occupation by the French

army of the Rhine fortresses belonging to him in the Duchy of Cleves, Orsoy, Wesel, Emmerich, and Burik, which were garrisoned by Dutch troops, appeared to offer an opportunity for a rupture for which he had already prepared the way by the recall of Croekow, his envoy at the court of Louis XIV. He was alarmed at the dangers to which the independence of Germany might be exposed by the growth and neighbourhood of so formidable a power, and was resolved to do all in his power to oppose it.

In vain did Louis XIV., uneasy at the summons addressed by the Elector to the Protestant princes of Germany and the northern courts, attempt to intimidate him through the intervention of another envoy, Fromenteau, Count de la Vauguyon, who called upon him to explain himself as to the position in which he wished to remain with regard to the King of France. The Elector proved immovable; notwithstanding all threats, he haughtily replied that he knew of no right that Louis XIV. had to demand categorical declarations of him, and that, on the contrary, it was he who expected explanations and information on the subject of the entry of the French army into the Duchy of Cleves, where it was behaving as if in a conquered country. Count de la Vauguyon was obliged to take his leave, after a week spent in Berlin, without having received any satisfactory reply.

The Elector of Brandenburg thought himself no longer bound to observe vain measures of conciliation, now that he had secured the co-operation of the Emperor of Germany. Feeling that any intervention to which the latter refused his assistance would be foolhardy, he had despatched his brother-in-law, Prince John George of Anhalt, to Vienna immediately upon hearing that Louis XIV. had invaded the United Provinces. The Prince of Anhalt had married the second daughter of the Princess Dowager, and was thus, like the Elector, uncle to the Prince of Orange. But he had always declared himself in favour of the States-General, and had long been on terms of personal acquaintance with the Grand Pensionary. The Elector now instructed him to obtain from Leopold I. himself a treaty of alliance. The Prince was received

with a cordiality that augured well; 'his presence and his attachment to their High Mightinesses,' writes the Dutch envoy Bruyninck to the States-General, 'are of great importance towards a resolution being taken here that will be agreeable to you.' His urgent and repeated representations gave the required impetus to the Court of Vienna.

French diplomatic art had spared neither threats nor promises to check the Emperor in the course on which he seemed disposed to embark. 'At a great dinner,' writes Bruyninck, 'to which General Souchet had invited the Prince of Anhalt, a servant came to tell him that a gentleman in the suite of Monsieur de Gremouville wished to speak to him. The general proposed to his guests to invite him to come in, not wishing to let them think that any secrets were being discussed. The gentleman then declared that he was desired by his master to tell the general that having heard of the dinner party, and supposing that a toast might be drunk to the approaching war with the King of France, he sent him four bottles of his best wine, and assured the company that the king his master would not trouble himself for any toasts that they might drink, but that Germany would soon repent them when twenty thousand Swedes invaded the empire.' The French ambassador was profuse in promises that might moderate the warlike ardour that disquieted him. In accordance with the instructions sent to him for the purpose of reassuring the Emperor, he was to guarantee the faithful observation of the treaties of Westphalia, and respect for the territory of the empire, 'but was not to allow sight to be lost of the danger of arousing, on account of a private war with Holland, a disturbance which might affect the whole of Germany.'

The Prince of Anhalt had skilfully forestalled these measures and rendered them useless. After a second audience, granted to him by the Emperor, he obtained an Imperial rescript ordering Prince Lobkowitz, the prime minister, to conclude the negotiations. Lobkowitz, still faithful to the French policy, vainly endeavoured to procrastinate in his usual fashion. In order to cut short all further delays, the

Prince of Anhalt opened direct communication with the Emperor, and represented to him that he could not let slip this opportunity for rallying around him the disunited empire. The Emperor at once sent specific instructions to Prince Lobkowitz, who replied by the most exaggerated assurances of zeal, and talked of nothing but his ardent wish to spur matters forward. On the next day, the first consultation was held with Montecuculi, the president of the Council of War, who was to have the command of the forces. It took place at the bedside of the Chancellor Hoher, who was confined to his room with the gout. Four days later Leopold I. gave his entire assent to the proposed contentions, and the Prince of Anhalt, anxious to place himself in direct communication with the Elector, and to baffle the adverse manoeuvres of the Chevalier de Gremonville, hastened back to Berlin, where the clauses of a defensive alliance were signed by the Imperial ambassador Baron Goes.

By the terms of this treaty, which Lisola lost no time in communicating to the Grand Pensionary, and of which the Emperor's ministers informed the Dutch envoy, Leopold I. and Frederick William renewed their recent engagements. They bound themselves to maintain the treaty of Westphalia and the internal tranquillity of the empire, to take up arms against all who might attack them, to place their troops at the service of that cause, and to obtain the adhesion of as many princes as possible to this league, which was to last for at least ten years. By its secret provisions, the two allies promised to put into the field 12,000 men each before the end of July, with all necessary equipments, the whole to be placed under the command of Frederick William. This treaty, which was apparently intended for the protection of Germany, was really meant to assist the United Provinces by the threat of a diversion. It enabled the Elector of Brandenburg also to place at their disposal the 20,000 men whom he had already pledged himself to send to their assistance by the treaty signed two months previously, and which had just been ratified.

The worst seemed to be over. Fagel, the secretary of the

States-General, hastened to send word to the Prince of Orange that the Elector's troops might, according to the assurances given by his ministers at the Hague, Baron Pelnitz and Romswinkel, be expected to enter the bishopric of Münster in about ten days. At the same time he communicated to the States-General the good news of the approaching arrival of this force, and of the treaty of alliance which the Emperor was prepared to conclude with the republic, and to which Leopold had pledged his word to his plenipotentiary Lisola. The States received this announcement as the first signal of their deliverance.

The Grand Pensionary was quite aware of the advantage that might accrue to the republic from this alliance. He had not therefore waited for the further progress of the invasion to declare to some of the foreign ministers 'that if the French army forced the passage of the Yssel, the province of Holland would be obliged to capitulate, and endeavour to obtain from the King of France the preservation of religion and freedom, without any consideration for the neighbouring states and sovereigns.' He uttered this warning cry that the echo might spread beyond the frontiers, and, although the loss of the Rhine fortresses did not as yet actually imperil the fate of the republic, he declared the United Provinces to be lost, in order to hasten the foreign intervention that had been promised.

The rapidity of Louis XIV.'s conquests left indeed no possible course open to De Witt but that of a temporising policy. The state of distress to which the United Provinces were reduced, until the inundations had restored some assurance of safety to Holland, was a sufficient justification for proposing terms of peace to the conqueror. As long as the road was open for his advance, the King of France could only be checked by the hope of obtaining from the States-General a treaty that should guarantee to him a portion of his conquests. To negotiate, and to take advantage of the negotiations to place themselves in a condition of defence, was the patriotic scheme which did honour to the Grand Pensionary's sagacity. He hardly flattered himself with the hope of obtaining peace from the

two hostile kings. His secret thoughts are shown us in a letter addressed to his brother four days after the resolution had been taken to make offers of submission. 'It has pleased their Noble Mightinesses,' he writes, 'to send a deputation to the Kings of France and England to obtain from them a statement of the terms and conditions on which the said kings might be disposed to treat with this State. I cannot imagine that there will be any good result, and I will let you know what happens.'

Although he did not deceive himself as to the success of the negotiations, De Witt considered them to be indispensable; but he feared the opposition of the Orange party, since the continuance of the young Prince's command depended upon the prolongation of the war. Though flattering himself that he should easily obtain the consent of the States of Holland, the Grand Pensionary foresaw that he might meet with resistance in the States-General from the other provinces, and particularly from Zealand, which was effectually protected by its marshes from any invasion by land, and was therefore less disposed to accept counsels of peace. It was needful, therefore, that he should convert to his opinions the principal adversary who might oppose them, the Secretary Fagel, who had now become one of the leaders of the Orange party. With this object he sought for the interview of which Wicquefort has left us an account, although there is no other document to confirm its authenticity.

According to him, as soon as De Witt heard of the passage of the Rhine, which seemed to leave the republic without defence against invasion, feeling convinced of the necessity of coming to an agreement without delay as to the conduct to be pursued, he called upon Fagel at four o'clock in the morning. He declared to him with more or less genuine consternation that he saw no means of preserving the republic or the province of Holland from the dangers that threatened them. Fagel replied that the republic had already been reduced to greater extremities, and that if God had formerly rescued her from the tyranny of Philip II. he would deliver her from slavery to Louis XIV., provided only that people would help

themselves by taking the necessary measures to check the enemy. He added that they should, therefore, take care not to abandon the helm before the vessel was on the rocks, and declared that he was ready to dare anything to bring her into harbour. He could not after this refuse to consent to the attempts at negotiation which the Grand Pensionary had in view. By thus alarming him with a show of discouragement that was probably more apparent than real, De Witt had gained Fagel to his schemes and made him more tractable.

A few hours after this interview, on the morning of June 13, the States of Holland assembled to take measures to provide for defence. Burgersdyck, the burgomaster of Leyden, at once made the first motion for overtures of peace by representing that the town of which he was chief magistrate could offer no resistance to the invasion. The despatch of envoys to treat with the King of France was then brought forward. No deputy opposed it. The members of the States of Holland had at first thought themselves bound to consult the magistrates of the towns; but the motion before them appeared so urgent that they determined to waive their objection.

The consent of the States-General remained to be obtained. Fagel had entered into John de Witt's views and had taken the necessary steps to dispose the deputies of the other provinces to acquiesce in the opinion of the States of Holland. Accordingly the debate already prepared by committees resulted favourably. Nineteen deputies were present, under the presidency of Dykweldt, the deputy of Utrecht. The deputies of Zealand contented themselves with declaring that negotiations must be opened with the King of England as well as with the King of France, in the hope that Charles II., as uncle to the Prince of Orange, would take care of his nephew's interests. One alone of the deputies of the province of Utrecht, Gisbert Van den Hoolek, in spite of his great age, protested vehemently against any proposal of peace. No other debate was raised, and by common consent deputations were sent alike to Charles II. and Louis XIV.

The States-General, being already represented at Charles II.'s court by their ambassador, John Boreel, who had not yet

returned from England, appointed Dykweldt and Halewyn to join him ; Van Gemmenick, a deputy of Friesland, being suggested as a possible third. The two plenipotentiaries sent by the States to the King of England, fully justified the confidence placed in them. Cornelius Terestein Halewyn, one of the judges of the Court of Holland, an eminent lawyer, whose mind was cultivated by the study of history and ancient literature, was, according to Burnet, 'a man of great vivacity, he apprehended things soon and judged very correctly. He spoke short but with life, and was a man of severe morals.' Weede van Dykweldt, by his experience in the public affairs of the Assembly of the States, had acquired a profound knowledge of its relations with foreign courts, and his qualities formed the complement to those of Halewyn, by his great abilities and the insinuating smoothness of his temper, which gave him a great hold over the King of England's ministers.

In the hope of obtaining Charles II.'s mediation, or at any rate his neutrality, with the King of France, the States desired them to put before him the interests of the Protestant religion as well as those of his nephew, the Prince of Orange, feeling certain that he would defend them. But their mission had no chance of success. The secret agreement between the King of England and Louis XIV. was an insurmountable barrier to their embassy. The ambassador-in-ordinary, Boreel, to whom the States of Holland had in the first instance applied to know whether the negotiators would be received, could not make up his mind to despair of the English Government. Being obliged to communicate to the States the answer in which Charles II. declared that he would not negotiate without a preliminary agreement with France, he observed with naive confidence that the King of England made no mention of refusing to receive their envoys. He could not, however, refrain from adding, 'The worst is, they may very likely be sent back, though at the risk of seriously displeasing the City of London ;' and wound up with the confession, 'I have twice to-day been asked to leave, and the request has been repeated in writing.'

The success of the offers of peace to the King of England

were dependent upon the negotiations with the King of France. To insure a favourable reception, the States-General had been careful to choose plenipotentiaries who might be agreeable to the latter, and the choice was made with a view to disarming resentment. The two principal members of the deputation had both in turn served on missions and embassies in France, where they had succeeded in winning the regard of Louis XIV. and his ministers. They were John van Ghent, Lord of Oosterwede, who belonged to one of the principal families of the United Provinces, and Peter de Groot, late ambassador from the States-General to Louis XIV., whom the States of Holland had just appointed as one of their deputies in the States-General. Both were obnoxious to the Prince of Orange, who had never concealed his dislike to Van Ghent, his former governor, and he had an even greater antipathy to De Groot, one of the leaders of the republican party and John de Witt's greatest confidant, whose relationship to Montbas laid him open moreover to unjust suspicions of treason.

To reassure the Prince of Orange, the States-General named at the same time two other negotiators upon whose fidelity he could rely ; Eck, deputy of Groningen, and Odyk, his chief councillor. Having obtained a safe-conduct and an escort, the plenipotentiaries started at once for the Castle of Keppel, near Doesburg, the head-quarters of the King of France. But there were but three left to fulfil the mission, one of them, Eck, having been objected to by the States of Groningen.

They arrived at midnight, and early the next morning communicated to Louis XIV.'s ministers the letter with which the States-General had charged them, asking him to state his conditions of peace. They were received by Pomponne and Louvois, and requested to state what offers they had to make. They replied that the States would think themselves wanting in the respect they owed to the King if they should propose any conditions before hearing his. This apparent submission did not soften Louis XIV. Two hours later Pomponne and Louvois, having received his directions, informed the ambassadors of the republic that the King declined to negotiate with them until they could produce full powers to conclude a

treaty. At the same time they gave him to understand that Louis, considering himself the master of the country he had already conquered, and flattering himself that he should soon be in possession of the territory he was about to invade, would not give up his conquests except in consideration of a suitable compensation. He looked to the States to indemnify him for the costs of the war, and further to give complete satisfaction to his allies. To this haughty language Pomponne added threats, declaring that if the States wished to avert total ruin, they had better make haste to negotiate. There seemed nothing left for them but capitulation.

On receipt of this discouraging answer De Groot, leaving Van Ghent and Odyk in Louis XIV.'s camp, hurriedly returned. Stopping on his way at the Prince of Orange's head-quarters, to inform him of the negotiations, he arrived in all haste at the Hague to ask for precise instructions and final orders. The States-General and the States of Holland were impatiently waiting for him. They were the more anxious and embarrassed that they were without their accustomed leader. The Grand Pensionary of Holland was unable to assist them with his counsel and advice at the very moment when the fate of the republic depended upon their resolutions. Four days before the return of De Groot, John de Witt, wounded in an ambush, and rendered incapable of fulfilling his duties, had been obliged to be temporarily replaced by his cousin Vivien, the Pensionary of Dordrecht.

On Saturday, June 25, 1672, De Groot made his report to the States of Holland. At the demand of the deputies of the nobles he was called upon to give his opinion. He represented the difficulties of a defence, the progress of the French King's conquests, the loss, either already consummated or soon to become inevitable, of the strong places of the Yssel and of the town of Nimeguen, and announced that Louis was expected at Utrecht and would no doubt soon make good his entry into Holland. He added that in making up their minds to negotiate, they might at least hope for the preservation of their liberty, their sovereignty, and the union of the seven provinces. The members of the Assembly were then each consulted in

turn. The nobles, through their spokesmen Van Dorp, Lord of Maasdam, and Wassenaar, Lord of Duvenwoorde, after thanking De Groot, pronounced in favour of the negotiations. They thought it best to be contented with assuring the independence of the republic, and subscribing to any conditions which would permit of its remaining intact. The town of Dordrecht, which had a prior right in the debates, demanded full powers for the negotiators, that they might in the first place obtain a suspension of hostilities, without which the safety of Holland would be imperilled. The deputies of Haarlem, Delft, and Leyden concurred in this opinion, each in turn setting forth the urgent necessity for an agreement. The deputies of Leyden warmly urged that the States of Holland should proceed in a body to the Assembly of the States-General, to induce them to accept without delay the position which now seemed inevitable.

This proposal had been almost unanimously accepted, when the deputies of Amsterdam, Van de Pol and William Becker, one sheriff and the other burgomaster, absolutely refused to agree to it. Emboldened by the security which the inundations afforded to their town, they expressed themselves amazed at the precipitation and weakness of the other members of the assembly, and added that in so important an affair it lay with the town councils to give their deputies the power of negotiating. They declared their intention of waiting until they had referred to the councillors of Amsterdam before giving an opinion, and wound up by pointing out the obstacles that would arise to the conclusion of peace if after purchasing it from the King of France they had to pay a ransom for the republic to his allies and to the King of England. This impetuous outburst threw doubt and uncertainty into the assembly. The deputies of several towns, although favourable for the most part to the proposals of peace, hesitated to take the responsibility of a definite vote, whilst those of Alkmaar resolutely made common cause with the deputies of Amsterdam in support of the opposition.

A fresh debate was demanded, and commenced at once. De Groot, being pressed again to give his opinion, persistently

urged that the welfare of the republic depended upon the continuation of the negotiations. He recommended the abandonment to Louis XIV. of Maestricht and all the towns forming part of the Country of the Generality, hoping that at this price, and in consideration of an indemnity for the cost of the war, Louis would allow the seven provinces to remain independent. 'I am persuaded,' he said, 'that the King of France will be content with less when he sees that much is offered to him.'

To bring round the opposition to his opinion, he informed them that Louis XIV.'s plan was to wait if necessary till winter had set in, and to avail himself of the ice to secure access to all the towns protected by the inundations, and that he might end by gaining possession of Amsterdam, 'after which,' he added, 'nothing is to be looked for but total submission and abject slavery.'

The nobles pleaded this opinion as a reason for an immediate resolution, as otherwise, they said, 'they should feel themselves obliged to ask for a safe-conduct for themselves, their wives, and children.' They repudiated all responsibility in the misfortunes which they foresaw if the States remained divided and irresolute as to the course to be taken. The deputies of Dordrecht, Delft, Haarlem, and Leyden laid the blame on the deputies of Amsterdam, alternately entreating and threatening them. The deputies of Delft deplored their obstinacy, and reproached them with forgetting that Amsterdam was not the whole of Holland, nor all Holland Amsterdam. The deputies of Leyden, continuing the debate, said, 'that if there was not time to consult the town councils, without danger of a fatal delay, it was necessary to be contented with getting the majority of the assembly to vote full powers to the negotiators. The deputies of Amsterdam remained inflexible. The proposals for peace seemed to them inadmissible. They declared that they had too much confidence in the patriotism of the town councils of Holland to fear that any of them would come to independent terms with the enemy, and, to set an example, they offered to go themselves as delegates from the States to the posts most threatened.'

The deputies of Rotterdam, Enkhuyzen, Horn, and Monnikendam, continued to demand either a unanimous vote of the Assembly or the authorisation of their constituents. The deputies of Alkmaar also refused to yield, and, unwilling to give their consent without orders to too onerous a peace, they declared that they would rather die fighting the enemy than perish victims to the fury of the mob. The meeting then broke up, still in uncertainty as to the course to be pursued. On the urgent representation of Burgersdyck, the Pensionary of Leyden, the members all agreed to meet the following evening, with a promise to provide themselves with instructions which would allow of their arriving at a definite conclusion.

On Sunday, June 26, 1672, between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, the sitting was resumed with anxious gravity. The deputies of Amsterdam were absent. Foreseeing, no doubt, that the majority of the Assembly would take no heed of their opposition, they determined to take no part in a resolution which they intended to repudiate. The deputies of Horn and Purmerend, who had refused to give an opinion, and those of Schiedam and Edam, whose support had appeared certain, were waited for in vain. The Pensionary of Schiedam, Nieu-poort, was detained by the townspeople, who had violently opposed his return to prevent his voting in favour of peace. Amongst the members present on the other hand the deputies of Rotterdam, who had hitherto held back, brought favourable instructions in spite of the threatened violence of the mob; and the deputies of Monnikendam, who had not yet spoken, also gave their consent. Those of Alkmaar, who had publicly supported the opinion of Amsterdam, also recognised the necessity of continuing the negotiations. All the deputies present consented to give their full authority for negotiating, excepting the deputies of Enkhuyzen, who objected, representing, though in vain, that the absence of the deputies of five towns, one of which was the most important of the province, made an adjournment necessary at any rate until the next day. With this exception the Assembly unanimously voted for making peace with the King of France.

This resolution was at once transmitted to the States-

General, who had assembled early in the evening, and did not seem likely to agree. The States of Zealand had already sent a deputation in the course of the day to the States of Holland to complain that they had not been first consulted as to the negotiations, and their delegates stated that they could not acquiesce without their approval. In the sitting of the States-General the ordinary deputies of Zealand made the same reservation and objected to any resolution. The deputies of Friesland, though not indisposed to the negotiations, also declared that their consent must depend upon the approval of the States of their province. The deputies of Groningen were absent. The deputies of the province of Utrecht stated that in the absence of any directions from the States of their province, who were unable to assemble now that their capital was occupied by the French army, they had no power to vote and considered themselves obliged to abstain. The deputies of Overijssel, whose province had been almost entirely conquered, merely observed that if peace were not made all would be lost. The deputies of Guelders alone made up their minds to express their decided consent. In this dilemma Holland, upon whom fell the chief cost of defence, and who had in a measure the republic under her charge since three provinces had passed into the hands of the enemy, did not hesitate to proceed, claiming the power of concluding the debate.

One last obstacle remained to be overcome. All resolutions before being put into execution had to be drawn up by the president, but Kann, the deputy of Friesland, who was presiding, left his place to prevent its being concluded. The deputies of Utrecht and Zealand, who had been presidents the preceding week, on being asked to replace him refused to do so. It became necessary, therefore, that one of the deputies of Holland, Adrien Wassenaal, Lord of Duvenwoorde, should preside. After having drawn up the resolution in the name of the States-General, he conferred full powers on the negotiators confirmed by the seal of the republic. The secretary, Gaspard Fagel, refused to countersign them, the resolution appearing to him an infringement of the rights of the States-General, who could not be bound by the votes of two provinces, and

he made his chief clerk, Spronssen, replace him, to avoid any responsibility in the proposals for peace.

The powers given to De Groot and his two colleagues were apparently unlimited. They gave them authority 'to negotiate and conclude any treaty which they thought necessary for the service and welfare of the republic;' and the States expressly engaged to ratify the decisions of their plenipotentiaries. It was, however, understood in accordance with De Groot's own request, that a formal record should be entered in the Assembly of the States-General and in the Assembly of Holland, 'that the treaty of peace was subordinate to the preservation and re-establishment of the sovereignty of the seven provinces, as it had existed before the war.'

Two days later the States-General, to prevent any possible misunderstanding, had this declaration officially entered. Instructions were at the same time furnished to the negotiators in regard to the indemnity, with the result that the utmost limit was not to exceed 6,000,000 florins. In the condition of distress to which the republic was reduced, these proposals seemed the least burdensome and the least disastrous that could have been offered.

The very next morning De Groot was urged to hasten his departure. The Pensionaries of Leyden and Gouda, who had been the most inclined for peace, entreated him to start without waiting for the formal delivery of his commission, which would be forwarded to him without delay. After having received from the States of Holland 'a guarantee for his person and property,' in case of any persecution on the part of the opposition, De Groot hastily left the Hague to return to Louis XIV.'s camp, carrying with him as it were the destinies of his country. Such extensive powers, in such difficult times, gave him a heavy task to fulfil, and, as if it were not hard enough, threats were not spared to him. A violent scene took place between De Groot and Fagel, if we may trust the account given by Wicquefort, with whom De Groot kept up a close correspondence. 'You can go,' said Fagel, 'and sell your country for the highest price you can get, but you will not find it easy to put the purchaser in possession.' 'It is better,'

was De Groot's reply, 'to save a portion than to lose the whole.' 'It is no use,' added Fagel, 'taking any thought for the preservation of your lands; they shall be ploughed up, and sowed with salt, that no one may benefit by them, even to the third generation.'

But this dramatic account, which is unconfirmed by any of the letters between De Groot and Wicquefort, seems doubtful; it is, however, true, according to the plea by which De Groot four years later gained his acquittal, that Fagel attempted, though in vain, to dissuade him from accepting so dangerous an embassy. Moreover the Prince of Orange and Beverningh said to him, when he returned to the camp, that they would not accept such a commission as his. De Groot answered, in words which do him honour: 'The State is not so much to be pitied as long as she has some one ready to risk his life for her welfare.' The service which he rendered to his country in consenting to negotiate with the conqueror, was the more meritorious that he might well have been disheartened by the universal distress, instead of undertaking an attempt to carry through negotiations which were the only means of gaining time, and thus saving the republic. Beverningh, who seemed at first to disapprove of his mission, could not refrain from testifying to him how much he hoped for the success of his embassy. 'The deputies who are with me at the camp are in great alarm,' he wrote to him after his departure; 'I can only prevent their becoming disheartened by giving hope of an agreement. I beg you, therefore, to let me know immediately of anything you can tell me, that I may raise their spirits.' As to the Prince of Orange, he had endeavoured to profit by the offers of peace made to Louis XIV. before he availed himself of them as the text of an accusation against De Groot.

The Princess-Dowager had already presented a petition to the States of Holland, 'to obtain permission to accept the King of France's protection for her house and property at the Hague;' but the States, not wishing it to be supposed that they despaired of the republic, refused to grant it to her. On hearing from De Groot of the instructions which had been

given to him to negotiate with Louis, the Prince of Orange showed himself no less solicitous than his grandmother for his personal interests. After demanding the military pay due to him, he wrote to the States-General for authority to claim the King of France's protection to secure him in the possession of his dominions, especially the Lordship of Grave, which he thought seemed exposed to a speedy occupation by the French army. The States of Holland granted him this authority 'upon sufferance,' whilst De Groot had replied to Louvois, who offered him a protection for his country house, 'that he would rather see it set fire to, than be spared any evils which might be inflicted upon the lowest subject in the States.' At the same time, the Prince of Orange wrote a letter to Fagel, in which he desired him to ask the States-General 'that he might be permitted to negotiate with the King of France in his own personal interests.'

It was not the Prince of Orange, but the town of Amsterdam, which, after having been the first to advise resistance, set itself against the proposals for peace. On June 28, 1672, the Town Council assembled to hear the report of the deputies to the States of Holland, sent by the Pensionary Hop. They had returned to the Hague the evening before, and made it known that in their absence full powers had been given to De Groot to negotiate. The Council at once authorised them to renew their opposition. Some of the councillors, Valkenier, Backer, Andrew de Graeff, and John Corver, as well as the burgomaster, Henry Hoeuft, were moreover commissioned to draw up a form of protest. The council, on receiving this scheme, proudly proclaimed that instead of negotiating for Holland alone 'there ought to be a common agreement with the other provinces as to the means of resisting the enemy with courage and vigour, and preventing him from making another step towards these provinces.' 'We have thought it well,' wrote the burgomaster the next day to their deputies in the States, 'to communicate to you the unanimous resolution of the town, in which the burgomaster and the thirty-six councillors concur.' The Council having, moreover, decided to remain sitting, took occasion to notify to

the people in case of need that they had taken no part in the negotiations. Their determination to resist sufficed indeed to satisfy and tranquillise the inhabitants. It was publicly announced that all the councillors were ready to sacrifice themselves for the safety of the town, of religion, and of liberty, and that they would continue to defend them to the last extremity.

This determined resistance was no doubt encouraged by the eloquent and patriotic speeches, delivered, according to the historians of the time, in somewhat declamatory terms, by the burgomaster, Valkenier, and the grand bailiff, Gerard Hasselaar. The deputies of Amsterdam communicated this bold resolve to the Assembly of the States of Holland. They further protested by the angry voice of their Pensionary Hop against the resolution which in their absence had given free powers of negotiation to De Groot, and the next day they tried to bring round to their views those deputies who had not assisted at the last sitting of the States. But they remained alone. In fact, the deputies of Schiedam and Edam brought back the consent of their Town Councils to the negotiations. As to those of Purmerend and Horn, in spite of instructions to the contrary they easily allowed themselves to be convinced of the necessity for a treaty. In defence of the unjust accusation of weakness against the determination which had been come to by the assembly, the deputies of Gonda and Rotterdam, supported by the nobles, and the deputies of Dordrecht, Delft, and Haarlem, represented that the plenipotentiaries were not authorised to allow the territory of the Seven Provinces to be dismembered, nor even to dispose of an unlimited sum, and that the question now was how to save the republic by peace instead of allowing it to be ruined by war. The deputies of Amsterdam, taking these explanations into account, softened their tone; but in spite of strong remonstrances from the Pensionary of Leyden, Burgersdyck, they demanded that their opposition should be entered in the minutes.

The interests of the republic were fortunately as well served by the party favourable to the negotiations as by that which

opposed them. In fact they offered a means of safety if peace could be purchased at a reasonable price. It sufficed moreover for them to be entered upon to check, if not to arrest, the progress of the enemy. They would enable the States-General to wait for foreign aid, which thanks to their alliances they had at hand, and to provide means of defence if all hopes of an acceptable peace should have to be abandoned. The negotiations thus prevented the ruin of the United Provinces from becoming inevitable. On the other hand the opposition was not without its advantages: it was a safeguard against any temptation to make greater concessions and sacrifices than the republic could submit to, and prevented the acceptance of peace at any price.

However difficult the situation, all was not yet lost. A month had no doubt sufficed to place at the mercy of Louis XIV. the formerly flourishing and prosperous republic to whose arbitration four years previously he had had to submit. There had been few examples of so rapid a downfall, carrying with it at the first shock the power of a state which the greatest monarchies in Europe had latterly had to take into account. But the ruin of the republic, which had hitherto seemed imminent, was nevertheless averted. The inundations had prevented her destruction and she might await safety either in the continuance of the war which she was now in a position to maintain, or by proposals of peace which it was for her interest to enter into, if only to gain time.

Unable to prevent the disasters which had overwhelmed him, the Grand Pensionary had done all that a great statesman and a brave patriot could do to repair them. The government over whose destinies he presided could not avert the storm, but it had made a valiant resistance, and had succeeded in preventing the damage from being irretrievable. But having thus done the work, John de Witt was not to receive the honour. Power was slipping from his hands, whilst a cruel death awaited him. There was nothing left for him but to yield his place to the Prince of Orange, and the happiness of saving the republic was thus reserved for the last descendant of the stadtholders.

CHAPTER XIII.

A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT—THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
STADTHOLDERSHIP, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

A restoration imminent—John de Witt considered as the enemy of the Prince of Orange—The public misfortunes attributed to him—His vain attempts to prevent or repair them—Vivien is assigned to him as a coadjutor in his office of Grand Pensionary—Attempted assassination at the Hague—His wounds—Condemnation and execution of Jacob van der Graef—His accomplices protected by the Prince of Orange—Cornelius de Witt in the same danger as his brother—General rising—Re-establishment of the Stadtholdership in Zeeland—Sedition at Dordrecht—Resistance of Cornelius de Witt to the repeal of the Perpetual Edict—The example set by Dordrecht followed by the entire province—The States of Holland reduced to powerlessness—Proposal for a change of government—It is supported by the Council of Amsterdam—Reservations made on the subject of the nomination of the magistrates of the town—The Prince of Orange elected Stadtholder of Holland and Zeeland, under the name of William III.—The States-General appoint him captain and admiral-general for life—Congratulations sent to him—Letter from his grandmother—He is solemnly invested with his office—Great position made for him—Negotiations—Proposals transmitted by De Groot to Louis XIV.—Exactions of the King of France—Report made by De Groot to the States of Holland—Deliberations—Opinion of the Prince of Orange—Speech of Van Beuningen—Refusal to accept the King of France's conditions of peace—Measures attempted with the King of England—Secret negotiations entered into with Charles II. by the Prince of Orange—Offers made to him—He repulses them—Treaty of Heeswyck between Louis XIV. and Charles II.—William III. declares himself in favour of a continuation of the war—Declaration of the States-General—Secret negotiations continued between the Prince of Orange and the King of England—They are in vain—Letter from Charles II. to the Prince of Orange—Military operations—Progress of the King of France's conquests—Taking of Nimeguen—Louis XIV. checked by the inundations before Bois-le-Duc—His return to France—Resistance offered to the Bishop of Münster—Siege of Groningen—He is forced to raise it—Termination of the naval expedition—Holland saved by a storm from the landing of the enemy's troops—India ships brought back to port—Services rendered by Ruyter—Organisation of the defence—Financial measures: forced loans—Information furnished by De Witt—Increase of the strength of the army—Louis XIV. gives up the prisoners of war—Choice of com-

manders: restoration of discipline—The powers granted to the Prince of Orange restore confidence to the United Provinces—Necessity for foreign aid—Assistance from Spain—Negotiations with the Emperor—Treaty of the Hague—Co-operation of the Elector of Brandenburg: his junction with Montécuculi—Insufficiency of this intervention—It nevertheless contributes to the deliverance of the republic.

THESE public disasters, which roused to frenzy the popular irritation, could not fail to prepare and precipitate a change of government. The United Provinces, reduced to their last extremity, had to find a deliverer. The Prince of Orange appeared predestined for the post which had belonged to his ancestors. It seemed only right that he should inherit it; he had all the prestige of the past, which forms part of the life of nations. To the attractions of youth he joined a precocious gift of command. He was a man who could make himself obeyed by his impenetrable reserve, his immovable composure, his unconquerable obstinacy, and even by the curt and concise manner in which he gave his orders without allowing of any misunderstanding or discussion. The authority which he exercised as captain-general brought him very near to that which he coveted as stadtholder, whilst the restrictions, rather apparent than real, which were laid upon him, seemed to absolve him of all responsibility in the misfortunes of his country. He did not fail to profit by this position of affairs. 'Those who held the reins of government,' he wrote later to the States of Zeeland, 'wished most unjustly to deprive us of the dignities which our ancestors held with such advantage to this State, and they further restricted to such narrow limits those which by special favour they were good enough to leave to us that we were thus incapable of rendering any service.'

The party which had remained faithful to the Prince of Orange, and to which was added those whom a desire for, or a prevision of, the change of government, rallied around him, suddenly put forward his claims as rights, and not content with asking for an extension of the young Prince's military power, by the conferring on him of the command of captain-general for life, with all the prerogatives that might appertain to it, they also claimed for him the civil authority,

requiring, in fact, the restoration of the stadtholdership, and showing themselves impatient to restore to him the power which was his family inheritance. Vehement complaints were made of the mistrust which had been shown to him in the instructions limiting his authority as captain-general, and the calamities of the war were laid to the charge of the insufficient powers placed in his hands.

'It was time,' said all those who took their watchword from the Prince's friends, 'to take his Highness out of guardianship, and to give the republic a chief with which it could no longer dispense, otherwise there was nothing to hope for.' The necessity for retrieving the disasters of the war by unity of action was appealed to, to put an end to the oligarchical government of the Dutch citizens, and insured sooner or later the inevitable ascendancy of the military party represented by the Prince of Orange. There was but one man who could stem this torrent, swelled as it was by all the passions of the people. The Grand Pensionary had hitherto alone prevented the States of Holland from being deprived of their sovereignty by a change of government. During the nineteen years in which he had governed the republic, he had been enabled by the firmness of his conduct and the superiority of his intellect to surmount all obstacles, baffle all manœuvres, and preserve to his province a government without a stadtholder, as it had been organised by the Grand Assembly of 1650.

Scrupulously faithful to the oath which bound him to support it, he made resistance to the Orange party his first duty. Still, far from treating the young Prince of Orange as an enemy, he had always shown him the utmost respect and even affection. He had caused him to be brought up as a ward of the States of Holland, and had himself directed his education, until obstacles of every sort had been stirred up, and forced him to relinquish it. As the young Prince grew up, he had foreseen that the supreme command of the army must inevitably devolve upon him. Having made up his mind to offer no opposition to this, he determined at any rate to prevent his obtaining the powers of stadtholder, which

would have made him head of the government. The Perpetual Edict, which had abolished the stadtholdership in Holland, and forbidden any proposals of re-establishing it, and the Act of Harmony, by which the other provinces were obliged to make the office of stadtholder of the province incompatible with that of captain-general of the Confederation, were the barriers opposed by the republican party to all attempts at a restoration. De Witt, nevertheless, still held to a defensive policy. He had rather accepted than advised the Perpetual Edict, and had flattered himself that he could disarm the Prince of Orange's followers, not only by allowing him to be made a Councillor of State before he was twenty, but by promising him the command of the army as soon as he should have attained his twenty-first year. Unfortunately for him, he had not obtained any credit for this policy of conciliation. When concessions had become inevitable, instead of facilitating matters he had disputed them, thus adding fresh fuel to the hatred and ill-will of the Orange party.

He had, moreover, been deceived in his calculations by events, and the disasters of the war could not fail to bring destruction upon the government which he led. Every blow which could tell, in a struggle becoming daily more unequal, had fallen upon him. The rapid spread of the invasion was the signal for an explosion of implacable hatred against him, by giving an opening for working upon public credulity to his destruction. In spite of his resistance to the King of France, he was accused of being his accomplice, because he had not been able to shield the republic from conquest; and he was represented as being at the head of a great plot which had been long laid to give up the United Provinces to him, so as to prevent the Prince of Orange from becoming their governor. These calumnies were spread about in the most abominable pamphlets, whilst the preachings of many of the Calvinist ministers resounded in an appeal to violent passions.

'I have learned with sorrow,' writes De Witt some weeks later to Ruyter, 'the truth of what used to be said of the Roman Republic: *Prospera omnes sibi vindicant, adversa uni*

imputantur—'Each one attributes to himself the glory of success, but public misfortunes are laid to one alone.' The Grand Pensionary seemed in fact to be solely responsible for the invasion, whereas it was really the States-General, or even the States of Holland, who had more than once evaded, or caused the failure of, proposals constantly renewed for placing the republic in a state of defence. 'If a stranger,' writes Conrad Droste, one of his contemporaries who did him justice, 'were to ask why John de Witt, the adviser of the country, took no precautions?—why the forts which might have defended her were not properly garrisoned?—the answer is, that discord impeded the execution of everything that he proposed. If he asked that a formidable army should be set on foot, or demanded the nomination of a captain-general, if he required the strengthening of the ramparts or wished to provision the arsenal, some impediment was always put in his way. No consideration was taken either of the limitation of his powers to the province of Holland, which moreover only left him the power of persuasion, nor of the often insurmountable difficulties in which he was involved, nor of the services he had rendered and which he still continued to render.'

Before war was declared, he had urgently advised that they should take the enemy by surprise and strike the first blow. His plan for an offensive campaign was to occupy Cologne with a body of troops, and then to attack the French magazines at Nuys. He had with no less energy attempted, though with as little success, to prevent the union of the French and English fleets; he wished to hinder it by sending the Dutch fleet up the Thames to renew the audacious attack upon Chatham. He had shown the same foresight in organising beforehand the measures necessary to insure the success of a defensive war; and had his urgent advice that the works for the fortification and inundation of Utrecht as well as of Holland been carried out, the former province would have been saved from invasion.

From the very commencement of hostilities, he had advised a close watch upon the enemy's movements, so that the army charged with keeping the too extended line of the Rhine

and the Yssel might be brought together at the first signal, to oppose the passage of the river, and he lamented that more could not be made of the sources of information which might have enabled the Prince of Orange to oppose Louis XIV.'s entry into the country. The first news of the enemy's victories did not dishearten him. He saw at once that he must content himself with defending Holland by recalling all the available troops at the service of that province, and further rendering it inaccessible by inundation, so as to form one vast entrenched camp of which Amsterdam would be the citadel. Such were the lofty plans of resistance which he sketched when he wrote that memorable despatch to Beverningh which is not one of his least titles to be honoured by posterity: 'We must consider Amsterdam as the heart of the State, by which succour may be carried to all its members, so that, under God's guidance, we may fight against the enemy for our country to the last man, and with Dutch constancy.'

The Grand Pensionary thus bore without wavering the weight of a burden which seemed as if it must crush him. He never let himself be cast down or discouraged by misfortune and injustice. 'I usually spend the whole morning after eight o'clock,' he writes to Beverningh, 'at the military committee of the States-General, and write to you in great haste, not having yet eaten anything, though it is nine o'clock at night. I pray Almighty God to give strength to you, and to all who are entrusted with the conduct of affairs.'

He was so overburdened with work, that the States of Holland resolved to relieve him of his overwhelming occupations, by commissioning his clerk, Van den Bosch, to take his place at his desk during the sittings, to hear the deliberations of the members of the Assembly and take notes of them. At the same time they authorised him to have the more important resolutions drawn up by his cousin and devoted friend Vivien, the Pensionary of Dordrecht. Having been sent as commissioner to Major-General Wurtz, Vivien was absent from the Hague, and De Witt hastened to recall him. 'The misfortunes of the times so overwhelm us with business,' he writes to him, 'and we have so little assistance on account

of the absence of many members of the different commissions, that their Noble Mightinesses are obliged to summon you here, both to help with all your power in the interests of your country, and to aid me in my individual work.' Vivien only arrived at the Hague to replace instead of merely to assist him. A few hours after writing the letter in which he urged his return, De Witt, wounded in an attack to which he nearly fell a victim, was obliged to abandon the government of public affairs. The passions let loose against him had provoked the assassin's dagger.

On Tuesday, June 21, 1672, although night had already fallen, he was working in his own room, near the Hall of Assembly, to finish his task and wind up in the evening the affairs of each day, according to the maxim which he both preached and practised. At the same hour were congregated in the neighbourhood four conspirators waiting to fall upon him.

The two sons of one of the judges of the Court of Holland, Jacob and Peter van der Graef, had induced Adolph Borrebagh, the Postmaster of Maestricht, and Cornelius de Bruyn, a corn merchant and lieutenant of one of the burgher companies of the Hague, to join them in their criminal attempt. Taking advantage of the absence of their father, who had gone to Delft to secure his fortune against the invasion, they invited their accomplices to supper and discussed with them the public misfortunes, which they imputed to the Grand Pensionary.

Whether their plan was premeditated, or whether they only yielded to a sudden criminal inspiration, they stopped before the pond which edges the Palace of State, under the trees of the avenue fronting it. The light which they saw in the Grand Pensionary's room decided them, on a remark from Borrebagh, to profit by the darkness and solitude to await his coming, and kill him in this ambush. Being nervous from fright, instead of attacking him all together, they drew lots for the one who should first strike him, and twice the choice fell upon Bruyn. Whilst they were deliberating, John de Witt quietly walked out of the palace

between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, to return to his house, which was situated close by. He was preceded by one of his servants, Van den Wissel, who carried a torch to light him, and was followed by his clerk, Reinier van Ouvealler, who had charge of his despatch bag. The conspirators, protected by the shadow of the trees, were in possession of the road he must follow. When the Grand Pensionary had passed through the prison arcade they walked towards him. Borrebagh commenced the attack by suddenly snatching the torch from the hands of the servant who carried it, whilst Peter van der Graef, taking from the clerk the bag which he had charge of, prevented his going to his master's assistance. At the same moment Bruyn, in obedience to his instructions, threw himself upon John de Witt, and wounded him in the throat with his sword.

Although taken by surprise and unarmed, the Grand Pensionary had the courage and presence of mind to seize and overthrow the assassin. His accomplices at once came to assist and release him, and in this hand-to-hand fight they injured themselves whilst inflicting fresh wounds on John de Witt.

Jacob van der Graef struck him from behind with a knife, which, entering his shoulder, brought him to the ground with such violence that his head was badly bruised. The assassins, thinking that he was dead, retreated with all speed, whilst the Grand Pensionary, who was only wounded, had sufficient strength to get up and reach his house. The physicians of the States and the two surgeons Wilde, who were at once sent for, pronounced that his wounds were not mortal. He took to his bed with a raging fever, surrounded by every care bestowed upon him by his old father, his brave sister Joanna, the wife of Beveren, Lord of Zwynrecht, and his eldest daughter Anna. Ever faithful to his duties, he conquered his sufferings to write a calm and simple letter to the States of Holland, in which, thanking God for having saved him from almost certain death, he gave them the most precise details of the attempt from which he had escaped, and begged them to excuse his fulfilling his office until he had recovered. The States of Holland on hearing of this attempted assassination of the

Prime Minister of their province sent him condolences, in which the principal members of the republic joined. Uneasy on their own account, and fearing a great conspiracy, they took all necessary precautions for their safety by calling out the burgher companies, who hastened to respond to their appeal.

They showed themselves no less vigilant in the pursuit and punishment of the crime. They ordered the Court of Holland to take all possible measures for the discovery of the criminals, had all the gates of the town closed to prevent their escape, and promised 5,000 florins to those who might denounce them. One of them, Jacob van der Graef, the judge's elder son, had already been arrested. Believing himself to be secure, and anxious not to arouse any suspicions, he had finished the night with his accomplices, in the house of the librarian, Van Dyck, where the assassins had retreated to get Van Bruyn's wound dressed. The next morning, borrowing a cloak from his host that he might not be recognised, he thought he could return without risk to his father's house, but he found it guarded. A physician who had been passing by at the moment when Graef turned to make sure that De Witt had been killed, had heard some one say, in a low voice, 'Graef, Graef, where are you? come quick!' As soon as he heard of the attempt he went to the Grand Pensionary, to whom he communicated this information, and orders were at once given that the approaches to the judge's house should be carefully watched. When Jacob van der Graef arrived thinking he should find the way open, he did not understand the signs made to him by some of the townspeople on guard, who wished to favour his escape. The marks of blood on him, of which he was not aware, sufficed to denounce him. After some useless explanations he was arrested and finally taken to prison, and confirmed the suspicions against him by entreating the burghers who were conducting him to let him escape. At the third examination he was obliged to confess his guilt, and gave the names of his accomplices. He was much disconcerted when his sword, which had fallen from his scabbard and had been

picked up at the place where the attempt was made, was produced. He declared that he 'could assign no reason which had led him to attempt this assassination, were it not that he had been forsaken by God,' and expressed his repentance. 'When I made up my mind to assassinate the Grand Pensionary,' he said, 'I prayed God to grant me success in my undertaking if the Grand Pensionary were a traitor, but to cause me to forfeit my life if he were an honest man.' There was no excuse for him but that of fanaticism, and he was condemned to death. His youth (he was still a student at the University of Leyden), the esteem in which his family was held, and the flight of his accomplices, who had succeeded in escaping from the Hague, awakened interest in his fate in spite of the indignation inspired by this cowardly ambush.

According to more or less doubtful accounts, which are unconfirmed by any evidence, John de Witt was urged by some friends to solicit pardon for the culprit from the States, so as to regain by his clemency the popular favour which he had lost; but the Grand Pensionary maintained his usual austerity and refused this application, saying that even if he were willing to forgive his assassin, he was none the less obliged to let justice take its course, that the security of the other magistrates might not be compromised by the impunity of crime. To this story may be opposed a contrary declaration, according to which no demand for intercession in favour of the condemned could have been addressed to John de Witt: the constant fever from which he suffered for more than a week not having allowed of his engaging in any business. However this may have been, the postponement of the execution of the sentence was not granted, and Jacob van der Graef died courageously, although the executioner of Haarlem missed his first stroke before he struck off his head.

On the day of the execution, it was necessary to guard the scaffold, and to take measures to prevent the country people from attempting a rescue at the Hague. The pastor David Amya, who had visited Jacob van der Graef in his prison, published an account of his captivity and of his execution, several thousand copies of which were sold within a few days.

In it he drew an infamous comparison between the assassin of John de Witt and the angel mentioned in the Bible who wrestled with the patriarch Jacob. The Grand Pensionary's enemies made use of this libel to put forward his assailant as a martyr.

The three other murderers had escaped pursuit. They had taken refuge in the Prince of Orange's camp and there found an asylum in spite of the researches of the States, who vainly appealed to the Prince, as well as to the chief officers of the army. 'We have this affair much at heart,' they wrote to him, 'and we are resolved to show our resentment to the authors of this attack on the person of our Prime Minister.' They even went so far as to denounce the secret protection which seemed to be shielding the fugitives from justice. 'We are informed,' they wrote, 'that they have taken refuge, either amongst the troops of the States encamped at Bodegrave, or in other quarters well known to your Highness.' These suspicions were well founded. Not only were the accomplices of Jacob van der Graef unmolested, but two months later they were able to take advantage of the general amnesty to return to their homes: one of them, Borrebagh, retaining his employment as postmaster, the reversion of which he obtained for his son; whilst the other, Bruyn, was chosen by the new Stadtholder to be one of the municipal magistrates of the Hague; their crime being thus scandalously recompensed.

A secret understanding seems to have pointed out both brothers for the assassin's dagger. Four days after the attempt made at the Hague against the Grand Pensionary, Cornelius de Witt, who had been obliged to leave the fleet in consequence of his sufferings from rheumatism, also nearly fell a victim to assassination. The day after his return to Dordrecht, in the early part of the night, four unknown individuals of suspicious and menacing appearance knocked at his door and asked to speak to him on important business. Being refused admittance on account of the lateness of the hour, they attempted to enter by force. But the burghers who were on guard for the night were summoned in time by the servants,

who had been enabled to run out by a side door and give the alarm. They came in haste and put the evildoers to flight, though unable to arrest them.

These criminal attempts against the life of the Grand Pensionary and his brother served to precipitate the general rising destined to re-establish the office of Stadtholder for the benefit of the Prince of Orange. This revolution had been skilfully prepared by false reports which had been spread to lead the populace into excesses. 'A rumour of the Prince's death having been bruited abroad at Amsterdam,' wrote Blaspiel, the Elector of Brandenburg's envoy, 'the people put themselves into the greatest excitement and wished to run to the Hague to take vengeance on those who were pointed out as his Highness's enemies.'

Zealand was the first to give the signal of the change of government, and the town of Ter Veere, of which the Prince of Orange was lord, took the initiative. On the very day on which John de Witt's wounds put him out of condition to continue the exercise of his functions, the inhabitants of Ter Veere assembled to demand of the members of the Town Council to vote in favour of the Prince of Orange, and they all either from fear or favour proclaimed him Stadtholder. The movement once set on foot spread through the whole province without meeting with any opposition. The people, in almost all cases, did but forestall the secret wishes of the magistrates, who, though not daring to break the agreement concluded with the States of Holland, were quite ready to allow themselves to be overmastered. The declaration of the States of Zealand in favour of the Prince of Orange had become inevitable when the rising of Holland made it superfluous.

A few days had sufficed for the example given by the inhabitants of Ter Veere to be followed by the town of Dordrecht, which more than any other seemed to be interested in preserving an inviolable fidelity to the government of the States. It was considered as a possession of John and Cornelius de Witt, who were born there, and who, either in their own persons, or through their relations and friends, had

hitherto ruled the Town Council. Its defection was, therefore, an irreparable blow to the republican party. The way was prepared by suspicions treacherously insinuated against the municipal magistrates. The deputies sent to the States by the Council of Dordrecht having advocated peace, the burghers allowed themselves to be persuaded that the councillors were already negotiating with the enemy for the capitulation of the town. They demanded of them, whether they were resolved to defend it in the event of its being attacked, and received for an answer that they would sacrifice life and fortune to resist an invasion.

This answer did not suffice to restore confidence to the inhabitants. An inspection of the magazines was required to ascertain the means of defence. The absence of the keeper, to whom they applied for the keys, gave the pretext for a cry of treason, which was repeated on all sides. In vain were the magazines subsequently opened, so that all could easily satisfy themselves that they were sufficiently provided.

The mob had assembled with the most hostile demonstrations, and the leaders who directed it gave the signal for an insurrection by hoisting two flags on the summit of the tower: one, orange-coloured, floated above the other, which was white, with this inscription: 'Orange op, Wit onder'—John de Witt's surname signifying white in Dutch. This play upon words was intended to serve as a war-cry against the Grand Pensionary and his party.

The council of magistrates was obliged to assemble in obedience to the injunctions of the populace. A workman stopped the burgomaster, Hallingh, who was trying to escape, and, hatchet in hand, threatened to brain him if he offered the slightest resistance to the will of the people. Not daring to remain faithful to the Perpetual Edict, which they had sworn to maintain intact, and fearful if they consented to set it aside of having to answer to the States for the violation of their oath, the magistrates flattered themselves that they had found an alternative. They announced by sound of trumpet, that a deputation had been sent to the Prince of Orange to adjure him to come without delay to Dordrecht. They chose two

burgomasters, John Hallingh and John van der Burg, the secretary of the town, Orent Muys, two members of the Council, Graef and Van der Velden, two burgher-captains, and two citizens. The populace escorted them outside the town with cries of 'Long live his Highness!' 'Death to the bad magistrates!' The deputies having arrived at the Prince of Orange's camp at Bodegrave made known to him the commission they had received. Always careful to avoid compromising himself, the Prince, who was anxious to guard himself against any accusation of complicity with the sedition, began by refusing to respond to their appeal, alleging the necessity of remaining at his post. Dreading the explosion of the popular fury if they could not announce his arrival, the deputies urged him to start, and he yielded to their prayers, appearing to allow himself to be conquered.

The next morning, June 29, 1672, he made his solemn entry, in company with the members of the deputation, to whom were added John and Cornelius de Witt's brother-in-law, Jacob de Beveren, Lord of Zwyndrecht, councillor-deputy for the States of Holland. The inhabitants formed an escort for the young Prince, conducting him to the Town Hall, whither he proceeded on foot wearing his hat. The magistrates followed him with heads uncovered and warmly invited him to take his seat in the Council, but avoided suggesting any measures to him so as to make him responsible for whatever decision might be arrived at. They inquired if he had any proposal to make to them. The Prince, though surprised at their silence, concealed his astonishment and reminded them that he had only come at their request to hear what they had to say to him. They, without breaking through their reserve, thanked him for the honour he had done them in coming to the town, and invited him to visit the fortifications and magazines, hoping thus to delude the mob. But on the return from this inspection the inhabitants, fearing to be deceived, crowded round his carriage, and obeying the order given them by the pastor, Henry Dibbets, refused to let him go before he had secured the magistrates' votes.

The Prince having merely declared himself contented, the

more excited ones loudly demanded whether the magistrates had proclaimed him, declaring that they would soon get his father's office restored to him. To force an answer, a gun was levelled at one of the burgomasters who accompanied him. In vain did the latter, placing himself at the door of the carriage, endeavour to calm them by crying, 'Long live Orange!' The angry crowd would not be put off by mere words. They followed the Prince to the 'Peacock' inn, where the magistrates had prepared a repast for him, and threatened to massacre them if they did not bring in the bill for the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership in the Prince's favour. One of the rioters, entering the room and addressing the Prince, said to him, 'Let your Highness ask for anything he pleases, and we will see that he gets it.'

The magistrates, forced to yield and not daring to quit the inn until they had consented to give the satisfaction demanded of them, ordered the Secretary of the Council to draw up the resolution, in which they declared that in the name of the town they made choice of the Prince of Orange as Stadtholder. The Prince, who never forgot prudence, thought it well to call to mind the solemn oath he had taken on the day of his nomination as captain-general, vowing obedience to the Perpetual Edict. The magistrates were obliged to relieve him of his vow, through the pastors Dibbets and Verehem, who had distinguished themselves in the day's proceedings. The first act of the revolution was accomplished. In the enthusiasm, to which all yielded, there was but one solitary attempt at resistance. Cornelius de Witt, above all weaknesses, obstinately opposed the imperious demands of his fellow-citizens. When the resolution announcing the restoration of the Stadtholdership had been signed by the seventeen councillors present, it was observed in the crowd which had remained assembled that his signature was wanting, and his enemies would not let slip such an opportunity of humiliating him. He was still confined to his bed by illness, and to oblige him to ratify the resolution passed in his absence, the secretary of the town, Muys, was sent to him, accompanied by the captain of the burghers, Hoogewerf. After having read the Act he was required to

sign, Cornelius de Witt asked if the wording could not be altered, 'using less positive terms.' The answer being in the negative, he declared that he would be killed in his bed rather than give his consent. 'You may cut off my head with the sword you have at your side,' he said to the captain of the burghers; 'as for me, I have sworn an oath to the Perpetual Edict, and since I have not been relieved of it, I shall keep to it.' The captain having protested that he had not come as an assassin, he shortly answered, 'Whatever happens, I cannot sign.'

Nevertheless, the intervention of his wife shook his determination to refuse, by setting the feelings of the husband and father against those of the citizen. Maria van Berkel, fearing that her house would be broken into by the mob congregated before the door, and whom the captain of the civic guard could with difficulty restrain, felt her strong spirit quail. Although she had always given proof of a masculine intrepidity in the midst of the perils which had more than once threatened her husband, she now urgently pressed him to yield. Cornelius de Witt still resisted her entreaties. To overcome his refusal, she told him with despair that there was nothing left for her to do but to go away, for she considered that as a mother she must insure the safety of her children's lives.

Vanquished by her tears, Cornelius took the pen which his suffering hand could scarcely hold. He wrote his name, and added these two letters, 'V.C.,' which meant *Vi coactus* (constrained by force). The secretary, Muys, asked for an explanation, and begged him to scratch them out so as not again to arouse the fury of the mob. 'I shall not retract them,' he said, 'for without them I should not consent to sign.' While his wife was, unknown to him, effacing them, foreseeing this pious subterfuge of conjugal affection, he asked the secretary to draw up a report of his protest, of which he later secured a copy. He had placed himself in a position, as he himself proudly affirmed, of proving to the States, his masters, that he was no perjurer. The next day, Vivien, who had been authorised by the States to return to Dordrecht and use his influence as pensionary of the town in restoring order, inspired

by the example of Cornelius de Witt, signed the Act revoking the Perpetual Edict, but added after his name these words, 'as Pensionary,' so as to show that he only executed the orders of the magistrates whom in the discharge of his office he was bound to obey.

The popular movement in Dordrecht did not remain a solitary instance, but was like a train of powder spreading the fire. At Rotterdam, where the Orange party had secured the complicity of the captains of the civic guard, the disorder commenced by acts of violence towards the pensionary, Peter de Groot, and one of the deputies of the town, Van der Aa. On their return from the Hague to render an account to the magistrates of the resolution of the States on the negotiations with the King of France with which Peter de Groot had been commissioned, they were both denounced as traitors, and their lives placed in jeopardy without the members of the Council daring to order any measures to be taken against those who had assailed them. This impunity encouraged the plot which was being formed by the officers of the civic guard. At the first news of the insurrection of Dordrecht, one of them, Jacob Vossnaar, took advantage of the service which was assembling the inhabitants in the great church, had all the roads leading to it occupied by his company, and forced everyone as they came out after the sermon to declare whether they were partisans of the Prince or of the States.

An assembly was thus improvised to demand the nomination of a stadtholder. The pastor Borstius made a speech to them, and Naersen, one of the magistrates who had gone over to the Orange party, offered to transmit to the councillors the wishes of the people, whilst the Orange flag hoisted on top of the town belfry announced the change of government. Threatened with pillage and death, the councillors united together to pass the resolution, to which the burgomasters Pesser and Vivesy alone opposed a courageous resistance. The next day deputies were sent to the Prince of Orange to inform him of his nomination, and the burgomaster Vivesy, who accompanied them, did not shrink from telling him of the way in which the magistrates had been intimidated. He, displeased

no doubt at this bold declaration, or anxious not to go too far, met them with cold reserve. He received them near his camp at Bodegrave, without getting out of his carriage, in presence of Beverningh, and only replied that he accepted the office of stadtholder solely for the benefit of the State.

The same scenes were elsewhere renewed with more or less violence. At Schiedam the populace hoisted the Orange flag on the belfry, and the burgomaster, Nieuwport, was threatened by the rioters. At Haarlem the burghers exacted from the magistrates, who offered no resistance, a declaration of the Prince of Orange as Stadtholder. At Gouda, the house of the burgomaster, Reinier Kant, was besieged by women and children. The magistrates, to satisfy the populace, hastened to send their pensionary, Van den Tocht, to the Prince to assure him of a vote in his favour; which assurance they confirmed, by receiving him in the town when he responded to their appeal. At Delft, where the inhabitants remained faithful to their magistrates, the people from the country and the neighbouring seaports, under their ringleaders, assembled during the night, crossed the ditches on rafts, and scaling the ramparts burst into the town with cries of, 'Long live the Prince of Orange!' The magistrates, in dismay, not having at hand the civic guard, which was in garrison at one of the fortified posts, averted the dangers which threatened them, by giving their consent to the restoration of the Stadtholdership. Still, before notifying it to the Prince, they commissioned their burgomasters to go, unknown to the insurgents, to the States of the Provinces, to appeal to them for protection and obtain their consent.

The States of Holland found themselves disarmed and powerless. Assailed at once by the trials of a victorious invasion and of an imminent revolution, deprived of the direction of their Grand Pensionary, who was confined to his room by the wounds which had nearly cost him his life, they could no longer either stop or impede a movement which had become irresistible. The unanimous determination of every member of their Assembly would scarcely have sufficed to enable them to resist. It was already shaken by the impatience of all

those who felt themselves free to manifest henceforth their secret preferences, and whose interest it was, by giving proof of a tardy zeal, to assure themselves of the good graces of their new master. They were, nevertheless, checked by the fear of perjury; the Perpetual Edict, to which the deputies had sworn, interdicting in the most stringent manner any proposition for the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership. The deputies of the two towns most favourable to the Prince of Orange, Leyden and Haarlem, had been satisfied to propose an extension of his military powers. They claimed for him such perfect independence in his command as would free him from all subjection to the deputies in his camp, and demanded that the right of giving orders for moving the troops should cease to belong to the States of the Provinces. The States of Holland seemed disposed to make these concessions, hoping that they would enable them to escape the fresh exactions which they dreaded. But this was no longer sufficient satisfaction to the partisans of the Prince of Orange, and on the very day when it was unanimously voted they demanded a change of government.

They were encouraged in this by the absence of John de Witt, and the departure of Vivien, who had been recalled to Dordrecht. They had no longer now to fear that inflexible resistance which might have been opposed to them. On the contrary, they could count on the Pensionary of Leyden, Burgersdyck, who, failing the pensionaries of Haarlem and Delft, both also absent, would preside in the Assembly. They had taken care to ascertain beforehand how the motion, which was impatiently awaited, would be received. The commissioners sent to the Hague by the magistrates of Rotterdam to transmit to the States the resolutions which had been passed by the Town Council in favour of the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership, had asked the deputies of Rotterdam, who were still hesitating, to be the first to declare themselves, and had put themselves into communication with Burgersdyck. It was the latter who at the close of the sitting asked the members of the States to consider 'whether permission might not be given to a few of the deputies to make a proposal for

the benefit of the country, although it might be contrary to some resolutions now in force.'

This proposal was favourably received. A pretext was thus found for evading the oath taken to the Perpetual Edict, and the deputies could with impunity liberate themselves from the engagements it imposed upon them. The next day's sitting was clouded by bad news. Misfortunes were accumulating on the States. De Groot had just reported to them the inexorable conditions which Louis XIV. was determined to impose upon them, and which did not permit of their purchasing peace excepting at the cost of humiliation and dismemberment. They were entangled in the difficulty of having to decide upon a course to take, as to the acceptance or refusal of these severe conditions, when the news of the insurrection at Dordrecht, of the rising of Rotterdam, and of the violence exercised at Delft and Haarlem, succeeding each other like the dismal strokes of an alarm bell, gave the last touch to the consternation of the Assembly.

The time had been well chosen to hasten the development of the revolution which the States would now be forced to sanction. Encouraged by the first overtures made to the Assembly on the preceding day, the deputies of Rotterdam took indirect measures to hasten the debate which could no longer be delayed. The motion was brought forward by the burgomaster, Pesser, who had hitherto been looked upon as one of the principal adversaries of the Orange party.

He began by stating that he had an important communication to make on the part of the town, for the good of the country, which honour and law did not allow of his making public unless he received express permission to speak of it. There were only three of the nobility present in the Assembly, Duvenwoede, Asperen, and Maasdam. They affected surprise and demanded more precise explanations, but gave it to be understood that everyone ought to have perfect liberty to propose any resolutions demanded by the interests of the State. The deputies of Dordrecht, not wishing to act in opposition to the determined resistance of which their fellow citizen, Cornelius de Witt, had just set the

example, vainly tried to stem the current, stating that they did not consider themselves authorised to permit the discussion of an affair concerning which all deliberation was forbidden by law.

But they stood alone. The deputies of Delft declared that they considered themselves at liberty to express their opinion if authorised by their Town Council. The deputies of Haarlem, less timid, pronounced in favour of the demand of Rotterdam, representing the necessity of giving prompt satisfaction to the people, and the danger of refusing. The deputies of Leyden, with still greater boldness, set aside all the caution still shown by the members of the Assembly, and used no further evasions. The pensionary Burgersdyck represented in their name that it was useless to keep up any further pretence, and demonstrated that the aim of the proposal of Rotterdam was the abolition of the Perpetual Edict. He demanded that it should be taken at once into consideration, but added that he could not declare himself without having received instructions from the magistrates of Leyden, from whom he was only a delegate. This frank statement put an end to all uncertainty, and the deputies, proceeding to a second ballot, no longer hesitated to speak openly in favour of the abolition of the Perpetual Edict.

The nobility voted first for their exemption from the oath. The Pensionary of Haarlem, not willing to be forestalled, demanded that the nomination of the Prince of Orange as Stadtholder should be at once proceeded with, so as to avoid delays, which could but be prejudicial. The other deputies, for the most part more cautious, held back, but they agreed as to the dispensation from the oath, both for themselves and for the magistrates of the towns so that they also might be consulted.

To avoid any loss of time, it was agreed that the resolutions of the Town Councils should be communicated at the next sitting, which was fixed for two days later, and to which all the members of the States were solemnly convoked. 'There has been a very long debate in the Assembly touching an important point in regard to your Highness,' writes to the Prince

of Orange his chief confidant, Asperen, president of the councillor-deputies; 'I think that in three days your Highness will be Stadtholder. Eleven votes have already been given, and the rest are preparing. By next Sunday all votes will be given for your Highness. As I write your affair is rapidly advancing.'

It remained to be seen what would be the attitude of Amsterdam, which had not yet declared itself. Twenty years previously it had offered a determined resistance to the late Stadtholder, the father of the Prince of Orange, and had long remained the faithful ally of the republican party. But since the inhabitants had become so eager for the continuation of the war they loudly demanded a new government, so as to oppose an obstacle to any attempt at negotiations. 'It is time,' wrote a correspondent from Amsterdam to the French agent Bernard, 'that the magistrates should give up the Perpetual Edict, as the people are already collected to force them to it.' Moreover, the magistrates, who, in dread of a popular rising, had voted against the full powers given to De Groot to treat with Louis XIV., were disposed to allow themselves to be dictated to rather than to resist. The majority showed themselves most favourably disposed towards the Prince of Orange, in which they were encouraged by Van Beuningen and by Valkenier, who had become a warm partisan of the Orange cause. Still they did not venture to take the initiative in a proposal tending towards the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership, and they evaded sending a deputation to the Prince of Orange, as they had been required to do, by Councillor Outshoorn.

The cautious reserve of the chief burgomaster, Henry Hooft, supported by the sheriff, Bontemantel, and by Andrew de Graeff, John de Witt's uncle, gained the day for a temporising policy. The deputies from Amsterdam to the States having asked for instructions as to their conduct, the Council gave them to understand that they were to abstain from making any motion, and only authorised them to give a favourable vote in the event of the Assembly being unanimous. Andrew de Graeff, to whom the message was confided, being

denounced as one of the accomplices of the peace party, and suspected of having been sent to the Hague to ratify the proposals of the King of France, was near falling a victim to the popular fury.

This irritation calmed down the next day, when the Council, learning that the members of the States had relieved themselves of their oath, and had left the magistrates of the towns free to give their opinion, hesitated no longer. According to the unpublished report of the sitting, as it was reproduced by Sheriff Bontemantel, who was present, no debate would have taken place in the Council on the vote revoking the Perpetual Edict, if Valkenier, for the mere purpose of differing, had not proposed to nominate the Prince of Orange Count of Holland, but without making any change in the solemn decree which had abolished the office of Stadtholder. This would have re-established the Stadtholdership under another title, and with much extended powers, and would have made the Prince of Orange the sovereign of Holland. Valkenier not only proposed thus to evade the difficulty of revoking the Edict, of which he had been the principal promoter, but he flattered himself that his proposal would go farther than those hitherto made by the most avowed partisans of the restoration. He had already brought over several councillors, when Bontemantel strongly protested that it would only rouse fears and enmities, as the title of Count would seem to menace the liberty of the country. He added that the members of the States who were ready to come to an understanding on the appointment of a Stadtholder would inevitably be divided if any other proposal were made to them, and laid stress upon the necessity of their union for the welfare of the republic.

The magistrates of Amsterdam, allowing themselves to be persuaded, were content to order their deputies to support the demand for the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership, and desired them to spare no pains to obtain a unanimous vote.

Everywhere else the Town Councils hastened to give their assent to the proposal for the abrogation of the Perpetual Edict, and when the States of Holland reassembled on Sunday

night, July 3, 1672, they had only to sanction the vote of the magistrates. All the members of the Assembly, excepting those of Schiedam, who only arrived in the course of the deliberation, were present at the opening of the sitting. They were resolved, or resigned, to acknowledge the necessity of ending the interregnum of the House of Orange, which had lasted twenty years. In the absence of the Grand Pensionary de Witt and his coadjutor Vivien, the deliberations were conducted by the Pensionary of Delft, Van der Dussen. The debate once opened, no further objection was made to the dispensation from the oath, which was formally registered.

The re-establishment of the Stadtholdership was at once proposed by the deputies of Amsterdam; but although all the members agreed to it, there was great diversity of opinion as to the powers which should be given to the Stadtholder, and it was those deputies who had hitherto been most in favour of the Prince of Orange who now held back. Haarlem and Leyden demanded the preservation of the municipal privileges, and that the choice of the city magistrates should continue to belong to the councils. Leyden represented, moreover, that the States of Holland ought not to hurry their decision without a preliminary agreement with the States-General, who by the Act of Harmony had declared the two offices of Stadtholder and Captain-General to be incompatible. But the deputies of Amsterdam, through their spokesman, Andrew de Graeff, pronounced against any restriction or adjournment. They said that no half-measures should be taken if it was intended to give satisfaction to the people, and added that the slightest delay would imperil the independence of the country. 'The Prince of Orange,' writes one of their burgomasters, 'is certainly worth an army of 20,000 men.' They summed up their advice in these laconic words: '*Hodie constat, hodie agatur.*'

Notwithstanding this pressure, the deputies of several towns, amongst others those of Gouda, seemed undecided, and a few, such as those of Alkmaar and Purmerend, peremptorily refused to leave the Prince of Orange master of the municipal magistrates. Moreover, as the appointment of the magistrates was

not included as a matter of course in the legal prerogatives of the Stadtholder, and could not belong to him without a special resolution of the States, the deputies, for the sake of agreement, took the course of reserving the question of this extension of his powers.

The Stadtholdership was thus restored without sacrificing the liberty of the towns, and the deputies who represented the republican party could flatter themselves that they had at last effected a compromise which preserved them from too great dependence. It was, however, to be but ephemeral. With the exception of this matter of the choice of the magistrates, the States conceded to the new Stadtholder all the dignities which had belonged to his ancestors. The resolution which re-established the Stadtholdership in his favour put him at the same time in possession for life of the offices of Captain- and Admiral-General of the province.

The States decided that a deputation consisting of one member of the nobility and the burgomasters of ten towns of the province should be sent to him to offer him the first magistracy of the country, and at the same time to relieve him of the oath which he had taken to refuse it. On Monday, July 4, 1672, at four o'clock in the morning, the resolution of the Assembly was definitively voted, by which the Prince of Orange, who was not yet quite twenty-two, was proclaimed Stadtholder, and Captain- and Admiral-General of Holland, under the name of William III. Two days previously the States of Zealand, overruled by the will of the populace, had taken the initiative, and had re-established the Stadtholdership of their province in favour of the Prince. The other provinces could not follow their example: three of them, Guelders, Utrecht, and Overijssel, being partially conquered, and their States unable to assemble. The two others, Friesland and Groningen, had kept as Stadtholder, under his mother's guardianship, Henry Casimir of Nassau, the young son of their former governor. As to the States-General, they hastened to set the new powers of the Prince of Orange in harmony with the functions of commander-in-chief, as they were henceforth to belong to him.

On Friday, July 8, on the proposal of the States of Holland, under the presidency of the deputy Horenkom, and in presence of twenty-five deputies, they proclaimed the Prince of Orange Captain- and Admiral-General of the republic for life, leaving in consequence the army and navy of the United Provinces absolutely at his orders. They gave him, moreover—but only while the campaign lasted, and excepting on the territory of Friesland and Groningen, which were governed by their own individual stadtholder—the free control of the troops in garrison and of the town and country militia. Five commissioners from the Assembly, representing the provinces unconquered by the enemy, and whose deputies could therefore continue to sit in the Federal Assembly, were sent to inform him of the resolution which united full military authority to the civil power with which he was now invested. To the official congratulations addressed to him were joined those of his grandmother, the Princess-Dowager, happy in her old age that she had lived to see the last descendant of the House of Orange restored to the offices which had belonged in turns to her husband Frederick Henry and her son William II. 'I am one of those,' she writes to her grandson, 'who had longed to see you in possession of all the offices which the States have given you. I am sorry for you that it should be at this time when all is disturbed, but I hope God will help you. I wish you the patience and constancy of your grandfather, and I have no doubt that if you ask God for His help, He will bless you in all things.'

The young Prince also received expressions of satisfaction and encouragement sent to him by the old master who had had charge of the religious education of his childhood, Cornelius Trigland, now on his deathbed. 'I pray God,' he writes, 'that your Highness may remain seriously attached, as you have always hitherto been, to the Reformed Christian religion, and that you may follow the maxims of your illustrious predecessors. If I should never see you again, you will remember that I served you faithfully, and that I taught you the foundation of the happiness in which all the saints of the Old and New Testaments died, and which is reserved to your Highness if you

build thereon. I pray that God may bestow upon you the gifts necessary to fulfil your office worthily, that He may grant you length of days and give you grace, that He may cover your head in the day of battle, and crown you with glory and victory, that He may give you the mastery over your enemies and those who hate you and may bring you back in triumph, and thereupon I kiss your hands with all respect.'

The Prince accepted the turn of fortune which restored to him the inheritance of his ancestors with his habitual reserve. When he received the deputies of the States of Holland in his camp at Bodegrave, he preserved his usual habits of discretion, and only asked them whether he was relieved of his oath. On their answering in the affirmative he desired them to be the bearers of his thanks, promising to make use of his authority for the deliverance of the country and for the restoration of internal peace. The deputies of the States-General, who four days later presented themselves before him, found him ready to enter into possession of his charge; and the day following the resolution which they had come to announce to him, he went to the Assembly of the Confederation to take a new oath in his capacity as Captain- and Admiral-General for life. He was first received as Stadtholder by the States of Holland. At an early hour in the morning he was introduced into their Assembly with the ceremonial observed for his predecessors, under the direction of Vivien, who filled the office of Grand Pensionary, and of Duvenwoorde, one of the members of the nobility, accompanied by the deputies of Dordrecht, Amsterdam, and Alkmaar. Having been invited to seat himself on a velvet arm-chair at the upper end of the hall, above the seats occupied by the nobles, he was then conducted into the Court of Holland to be received as chief justice. With equal tact and prudence he abstained from making any speech, and on the same day returned to his head-quarters. 'Here is the whole government of the country changed in a fortnight,' writes one of Bernard's correspondents from the Hague. 'All now depends on the Prince's wishes. Being master no one will dare to contradict him. In him is now concentrated all that remains of power

to the States. He is a sovereign, only without the name.' Saint Evremond had foretold this revolution to John de Witt. In one of his works he writes, 'I remember having often said in Holland, and even to the Grand Pensionary himself, that the character of the Dutch was misunderstood. They would be afraid of an avaricious prince capable of seizing their property, or an ungovernable prince who would do violence to them, but they easily accommodate themselves to a prince of some sort. The magistrates like their independence that they may govern those who are dependent on them; all the people are disposed to submit more readily to the authority of a chief than to that of magistrates, who are in reality but their equals.'

This chief could be none other than the last descendant of the Princes of Orange. The United Provinces, threatened with being engulfed by the flood of an invasion, looked to him to save them. They had confidence in him notwithstanding his youth and military inexperience, and were not disheartened by the inferiority of the forces at his disposal against their enemies, and this confidence was amply justified. Scarcely twenty-two years of age, having hitherto studied war and politics only in books, William III. showed himself in his struggle against Louis XIV. as one of the great generals and one of the first statesmen of his time. Upheld both by patriotism and ambition, he brought to bear upon the public misfortunes the most intrepid courage, and at the same time the most immovable strength of mind, and by dint of determination not to despair for his country he became its liberator.

The change of government could not fail to encourage resistance, but it would not perhaps have sufficed to break off immediately the negotiations commenced by Louis XIV. It was the haughty and unreasonable demands of the King of France which caused the States to relinquish all ideas of peace and seek the deliverance of their country in war alone. De Groot, as soon as he had received his powers, quitted the Hague and repaired to the head-quarters of the Prince of Orange, before going to Rhenen to join the two other negotiators, Van Ghent and Odyk, who had been appointed his colleagues in his embassy. Odyk, not wishing as a Zealander to put himself in opposition to the

deputies of his province who had voted in the States-General against the continuation of the embassy sent to the King of France, thought himself obliged to make some reservations, and De Groot had only Van Ghent to assist him. The two plenipotentiaries, invited by Louvois and Pomponne to make known their offers, began by proudly demanding for their country the preservation of the sovereignty, the religion, and the union of the Seven Provinces, and proposed to cede Maestricht as well as the Rhine towns to Louis XIV., undertaking moreover to pay 6,000,000 francs towards the cost of the war. Louvois received these offers with disdainful haughtiness; he demanded how Maestricht, which the States-General would willingly have given up to avoid war, could be considered as a sufficient compensation for the three provinces of which the King of France was already master, and for those others which he was prepared to conquer. De Groot and Van Ghent, in spite of the opposition of Odyk, thought themselves now at liberty to use that latitude which their powers afforded to them. They offered Louis XIV. in exchange for the towns which he had conquered in the provinces of Overysse, Guelders, and Utrecht, not only Maestricht, and the towns on the Rhine, but further all the towns directly depending on the territory of the States-General which were situated beyond the territory of the Seven Provinces either in Flanders or Brabant, such as Bois-le-Duc, Breda, and Bergen-op-Zoom, which formed as it were the girdle of the republic. They proposed to add a sum of 10,000,000 francs. Louvois replied that they were now beginning to talk sense, and promised to forward their communications to the King of France.

These proposals gave Louis the mastery over all the country separating the United Provinces from the Spanish Netherlands, from the Meuse to the mouth of the Scheldt. They thus paved the way for the inevitable incorporation of Spanish Flanders with the French monarchy, and insured the King of France his revenge against the Dutch policy, which four years previously had triumphed in the Triple Alliance. The aim of the long and skilful negotiations of French diplomacy was thus, if not attained, at any rate brought nearer,

and Louis might prepare to take up in no distant future the great schemes of Henry IV., of Richelieu, and of Mazarin, to extend the northern frontiers of his kingdom. Such concessions, in spite of the extremity to which they reduced the States-General, still left them a chance of some happy turn of fortune. No doubt, if their proposals were accepted they could no longer escape the dangers of the neighbourhood of France, and they lost the territorial guarantees which were their security. But they counted on the threat of a speedy invasion, to which the Spanish Netherlands swallowed up in the French possessions would be thus exposed, to alarm England and detach her from the French interests.

The States-General hoped thus to draw profit out of their sacrifices, to form later a fresh coalition against Louis XIV. which would hinder him from making himself master over the Netherlands, and would at the same time give them a chance of recovering that part of their territory which they had been forced to give up to him.

Still the King of France had so much to gain by the conditions of peace offered to him, that Pomponne strongly dissuaded him from making such demands as would be equivalent to a refusal. The hot-headed advice of Louvois, to which the King gave the preference, triumphed over this wise counsel. Fearing that he should be unable to follow up his projects against the Netherlands without breaking with England, Louis XIV. preferred first to complete the ruin of the United Provinces, instead of contenting himself with humiliating and weakening them. He thus sacrificed the aggrandisement of his kingdom to the ambition of dismembering and dishonouring a vanquished republic, by insisting upon conditions which could not have been harder if he had achieved their complete conquest.

The King's two ministers, in accordance with his orders, met the negotiators who had come to await them at Amerongen, near Utrecht, in the neighbourhood of the Castle of Zeyst, where Louis had established his head-quarters. Louvois announced to them the conditions to which the States-General were required to submit to secure the restoration of a few of

the towns of which the French King had taken possession, and to obtain the conclusion of peace. Louis considered the proposed abandonment of the territory called the Country of the Generality as insufficient, although the cession would make him master of all the possessions of the republic in Flanders and Brabant. He demanded that the frontiers of the United Provinces should be withdrawn within the Wahal as far as the Leek. He would thus have extended his dominions not only over the greater part of Guelders, but also to the island of Betuwe situated in the heart of the country of which he would have insured himself possession, from the Rhine at Arnheim as far as the territory of Holland, and even that would have been encroached upon by the annexation of the Castle of Loevenstein. He moreover pretended that he was acting for the benefit of his allies by giving up to the Elector of Cologne the town of Rynberg with some fragments of territory, and by assuring to the Bishop of Münster the possession of the principal districts of Overyssel. Finally the States were to cede to him the town of Delfzyl with its dependencies, and he proposed to make them over to the King of England, who would thus have in his possession the keys, as it were, of the province of Groningen. He offered the States as an alternative to content himself with the conquests he had made, provided he was compensated for those he might have made by the abandonment of the fort of Crèvecœur, of the town and mayoralty of Bois-le-Duc, and of the town of Maestricht. He thus required the States to despoil themselves.

The other obligations imposed by Louis XIV. were intended to put the finishing stroke to the submission of the republic, and thus make it the vassal of France. Had it only been a question of the public exercise of the Catholic religion, which Louis XIV. wished to place on the same footing as the Protestant faith, he would no doubt have been justified. But he made other exactions which were intolerable. He demanded the revocation of all the edicts detrimental to French commerce without any reciprocal compensation, the right of free passage for his subjects, who were to be exempted from customs or passport dues, and the conclusion within three months of a treaty of com-

merce, which should regulate the interests of the East and West India companies of France and Holland. He intended to use them according to Colbert's advice, to destroy the colonial power of the United Provinces. He moreover imposed upon them, as indemnity of war, the ruinous tribute of 12,000,000 florins. Lastly, to impress upon the republic the full force of a humiliation harder to bear than any sacrifices, the King of France imperiously demanded the envoy of a formal embassy every year, to present him as a sign of dependence with a gold medal, the motto on which was to be a humble thanksgiving to him 'for having left to the United Provinces the independence which the kings, his predecessors, had enabled her to acquire.' The full measure of outrage was thus filled up.

The deputies of the States could not conceal their consternation from Louvois. As they had received orders to negotiate, they made up their minds to argue the conditions offered to them, although they seemed impossible to accept. The King's ministers having promised to give them a final answer, they went to head-quarters to receive it, at the Castle of Zeyst, and it was made known to them the same evening at ten o'clock. The sole concessions granted by Louis XIV. were the diminution of the war indemnity, which was reduced from twelve to ten and a half millions, and the renunciation of the island of Betuwe, which he left to the United Provinces, consenting to give them as a frontier no longer the course of the Leek, but that of the Wahal, provided that all the fortified towns which defended the passage of this river were either dismantled or placed at his disposal. The deputies of the States could obtain nothing but these unsatisfactory and almost illusory concessions.

In spite of the urgent necessity for concluding peace, they cut short the conferences and, fearing to get too deeply involved, evaded any further proposals which seemed to be more compromising than advantageous. 'I think,' wrote De Groot later, 'this is one of the greatest services I have ever rendered to the States.' The ambassadors contented themselves with asking for and obtaining from Louis XIV. a delay of five days,

which would allow of their asking the States-General for a definite resolution.

The next day at an early hour in the morning De Groot, under the conduct of an officer of the French guard, started for the Hague, accompanied by Odyk, who, in consequence of instructions sent to him by the States-General, had no intention of returning. Van Ghent alone remained with Louis XIV. and the negotiations were thenceforth suspended.

Contrary to the provisions of Pomponne, Louvois was convinced that they would be again reopened. 'I hope,' he writes to his father, 'that by Monday night we shall know how we stand with our neighbours, and I am much mistaken if they do not sign anything they are asked.' Such was the general opinion. 'They have orders to do whatever the King wishes,' writes Pellisson, 'and they will be given credit for anything he does not ask of them.' 'The King will return Count of Holland,' writes Madame de Sévigné. 'My son says,' she writes in another letter, 'that everything has given way to the King, that De Groot has arrived to terminate the conclusion of peace, and that the only impossibility to his Majesty is to find enemies to resist him.'

Louis XIV. had at first appeared open to counsels of moderation, and had very nearly given way to the happy inspiration of his original impulse. 'The daily progress of my army,' he writes to De Gremouville, his ambassador at Vienna, 'puts me in a position to impose almost any conditions I please on the States, but I wish to listen to the promptings of my own generosity so far as is consistent with authority and the just rights of victory.' He allowed himself to be intoxicated by success without foreseeing the desperate resistance of the country he had undertaken to subjugate. In his account of the campaign of 1672, he did not hesitate to acknowledge his mistake. 'The proposals made to me,' he writes, 'were very advantageous, but I never could make up my mind to accept them.' He did not, however, think fit to excuse himself, and explained his conduct with a haughty pride which is not without grandeur. 'Posterity,' he writes in conclusion, 'may believe if it chooses in my reasons for so acting, and can at

its pleasure ascribe my refusal to my ambition and the desire for vengeance for the injuries I had sustained from the Dutch. I shall not justify myself. Ambition and glory are always pardonable in a prince, and particularly in a prince so young, and so well treated by fortune as I was.' But fortune was this time going to desert him, and unlooked-for dangers awaited him.

De Groot, having returned to the Hague on the very day that he quitted the King of France's head-quarters, found the States of Holland occupied in deliberating on the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership. He immediately informed them of the conditions imposed by Louis XIV., and urged them to make up their minds before the delay of five days granted to them should have expired. He contented himself in public with faithfully repeating his message without taking upon himself the responsibility of announcing his opinions, but in private he spoke without scruple, declaring that he would not be the last man to pronounce in favour of resistance. 'I would sooner die,' he said to Peter Schaep, councillor of Amsterdam, 'than accept such terms from France. The members of the Assembly, in despair at such a communication, did not dare to give an opinion until they had received instructions from the Town Councils, and took a copy of the report they had just received to send to them.'

The sitting which had been suspended was renewed on Monday, July 4, 1672, and the two parties for peace and war once more found themselves opposed. Fagel, the secretary of the States-General, had worked incessantly to rouse a spirit of resistance. He wrote to the Prince of Orange: 'The greater number of the members for Holland say that they would prefer to die by the sword. The deputies of Amsterdam came to me to-day to tell me that they would defend themselves to the last extremity, and I do not see how it would be possible to patch matters up. As for myself, I would suffer death ten times over rather than become the miserable slave of France, leaving our posterity ruined body and soul. I say this to all whom I see.'

In spite of his interposition, some last efforts to come to terms with the King of France were made by the deputies of the town, in whose name the abrogation of the Perpetual Edict had been proposed. The Pensionary of Leyden, Burgersdyck, who had lately been noted for his devotion to the Prince of Orange's cause, represented 'that since there was no hope of regaining what the enemy had acquired, any sacrifice ought to be made to prevent the King of France from extending his conquests, unless they wished to remain without a country.

The merciless rigour of the conditions of peace had turned the ideas of the Assembly into another channel. The change of government which had just been accomplished could not fail moreover to encourage the advocates for war to the last. Whilst not giving up some vain hopes of agreement, the majority of the members who had most urgently demanded that full powers should be given to De Groot were of opinion that they could not consent to accept the proposed treaty. The deputies of Amsterdam declared themselves still more plainly, laconically observing, 'the sooner the negotiations are broken off the better.' They had still in their minds the remembrance of the last sitting of their Town Council, when the two magistrates who were most opposed to any concession, Hooft and Hasselaar, had disavowed their secretary Peter Schaep, who in an interview with De Groot had seemed to approve of the latter treating for Holland alone, leaving Guelders and Overysse to France, should such an extremity be unavoidable. The Council had declared that they would have preferred not to receive such a report, and a few gave vent to their feelings on the subject of such speeches, threatening those who approved to throw open the windows, and call out to the people that they were being betrayed. To avoid such an extremity the magistrates, at the suggestion of one of the Council, Geelvinck, proposed that the Prince of Orange should first be consulted. This idea, which was put forward by the deputies of Amsterdam, found an echo in the Assembly of the States, and it was unanimously decided that before coming to any decision, time should be given for the new Stadtholder to make known his opinion. The next day, whilst De Groot was

being waited for in vain at the King of France's head-quarters, the Prince of Orange in a few words made known to the States that the conditions of peace did not appear acceptable to him, and that the frontiers of Holland might easily be defended if he received reinforcements. The States again resuming their deliberations set aside with one accord the proposals of the King of France, but nevertheless decided that they would ask the States-General to send De Groot again to Louis XIV. to offer him a new project of treaty, or in the event of a refusal to break off all negotiations. At the next sitting De Groot begged for more definite instructions. He reminded them that he had made full use of the powers given to him, short of consenting to impossible exactions; and finally demanded, if the negotiations were to be continued, the assistance of one of the deputies of the Assembly in conducting them. The nobles, in conjunction with the deputies of Dordrecht, Delft, and Leyden, offered him the assistance of Van Beuningen.

Thus forced to give his opinion, Van Beuningen suddenly changed the pacific disposition of the Assembly by absolutely refusing all participation in the proposed embassy. In an eloquent and vehement speech, a summary of which has been preserved in a manuscript of the time, he represented that Holland, far from gaining by continuing negotiations with Louis XIV., could only lose. She thus, he said, discouraged her allies, who feared to declare themselves in her favour, while she was trying to obtain a peace that would give them up to the resentment of the King of France. Spain, to whom the cession of the towns of the Generality appeared a first step towards the conquest of the Netherlands, would be dissatisfied. The irritation moreover of the other provinces, who had a right to complain that their consent to the treaty had not been asked, would be aroused, and Holland placed under suspicion and exposed to the accusation of abandoning the union. Lastly, popular seditions would be encouraged by giving ground for suspicions of weakness or treachery, and the last forces of the republic would thus be dissolved.

Van Beuningen, having moved the deputies by his reproaches, showed himself no less skilful in restoring their confidence. He dwelt upon the overtures already made to the King of England, and spoke of the great support given to the republic by the sympathy which the English showed for the Prince of Orange. He held out hopes of a mediation which should force Louis XIV. to modify his conditions, and which the latter would be unable to refuse without the risk of detaching Charles II. from the French alliance. He went on to promise the assistance of the Emperor, of the Elector of Brandenburg, and of the other German Princes, who would not allow France to become mistress of the republic. He pointed out that Louis' conquests were checked by the inundations, while they obliged him to weaken his army by numerous garrisons. He showed the danger of abandoning the conquered provinces to their fate, observing that if Guelders and Overijssel were left to France the enemy would hold in their hands the keys of Holland. Denouncing, therefore, as useless and dangerous, the despatch of an ambassador already doubted by the people, and whose mission would make the other provinces more distrustful than ever, he concluded by demanding that the conduct of the negotiations should be confided to the Prince of Orange. 'It is said,' wrote Pellisson from the French camp, 'that Van Beuningen is totally opposed to peace, and talks only of the Romans, and of the courage with which they defended their liberty.' The members of the States who had not yet spoken out were carried away by this speech, and declared themselves against further concessions. Not wishing to throw over De Groot, the majority of the Assembly, to prove their confidence in him, decided the next day, on the report of Vivien, that he should continue to fulfil the diplomatic mission to the King of France which had been confided to him, but at the same time desired him to represent to Louis the unbearable severity of the conditions of peace, which would not permit of their accepting them. Three days later, the States-General, at a sitting where only seventeen deputies were present, agreed to the proposal of the States of Holland, in spite of the protestations of the deputies of

Zealand, who held to their original instructions, by the terms of which they were forbidden 'to interfere in what had been done.'

The resolution of the States-General was rendered futile by De Groot's refusal to continue in his office. Being convinced that he could never again render any service as a negotiator, and threatened moreover by the assassins to whom he had so nearly fallen a victim in the streets of Rotterdam, he sent in his resignation, which was accepted.

The communications with which he had been charged were transferred to his colleague Van Ghent, who remained accredited to Louis XIV. 'to do his best in the interests of the republic.' This interruption of negotiations with the King of France was almost equivalent to a rupture.

Equally fruitless had been the attempt at a reconciliation with the King of England. An insurmountable obstacle had arisen in the treaty concluded between the two kings, which placed Charles II. in the pay of Louis XIV. Still the hope of detaching England from the French alliance was not altogether chimerical. Should the negotiations encourage the English to evince their discontent, it would be sufficient to arrest Charles and his ministers on the path upon which they had entered. With this view, and knowing how much uneasiness was felt in London at the increase of the French power, the States-General, as soon as Louis XIV. had crossed the Rhine, had despatched two of their deputies, Halewyn and Weede van Dykveld, on an extraordinary embassy to the King of England. They sent them to join their ordinary ambassador Boreel, who in spite of the declaration of war had not yet received his passport. Charles II. at once made their mission useless by taking measures to prevent their profiting by the cordial reception on which they counted from the people. On disembarking they were met by one of the King's gentlemen, who had orders to conduct them to Hampton Court, where they were strictly guarded and allowed no communication with anyone, nor could they obtain an audience. Although carefully watched they succeeded by means of their secretary, Kingscote, in entering into preliminary negotiations with the

Duke of Buckingham, who was beginning to show distrust of the French Government. As soon as Charles heard of this, he at once disowned his minister, assuring the French ambassador that he had taken the Duke of Buckingham to task for thus coming forward without any previous communication with the King of France.

The Prince of Orange, foreseeing the failure of the embassy which had been despatched to London, and wishing for some personal communication with his uncle, had also entered into a private correspondence with the King of England. He had commenced corresponding with him, before Charles had declared war against the States-General, through the intervention of a former gentleman-in-waiting of his mother's, Gabriel Sylvius, whom Charles had lately sent to the different German courts to try and induce them to enter into the alliance against the United Provinces. 'I have charged him,' wrote the Prince of Orange, 'to implore your Majesty to keep me some small place in your estimation, all my hopes of fortune being dependent on your kindness.'

Although Charles did not seem disposed to relinquish his projects in consideration of his nephew's appeal, the Prince of Orange did not lose heart. He confided a new mission to Frederic Reede, Lord of Renswoude, and lieutenant-colonel of infantry, in whom he had great confidence, and who was the more likely to obtain that of the King of England since his father, John Reede, a former president of the States of Utrecht, had, four-and-twenty years previously, represented the States-General at the court of Charles I. The Prince entrusted to him the following document, written by his own hand, which throws some suspicion on his conduct, and justifies the mistrust of the republican party, from whom, by his agreement with the King of England, he proposed to withdraw the government: 'In the event of your Majesty not being absolutely engaged to France, you can never have a better opportunity than this for getting all you wish from the States; and if your Majesty will let me know what it is you require, I will undertake to procure it, if it should not be absolutely opposed to the maintenance of the republic, in spite of the Pensionary

de Witt and his cabal, thereby placing them in the minority, and I and those of my friends in whom your Majesty can have perfect confidence will be placed at the head of affairs. Having thus obtained the conditions you require, your Majesty may always trust to this State, and I do not doubt, for my part, that you must feel convinced of my absolute attachment to your interests, so far as my honour and fidelity to this State will permit, which I am certain your Majesty would not have otherwise. No member of the government has any knowledge of this affair, and I implore your Majesty to keep it secret, assuring you that I shall be able to deal with any answer you may send me, and that I have no other aim in this matter than the interests of your Majesty.'

Charles was not unmoved by these advances, and although he showed no haste to respond, he did not intend to neglect to profit by them. The moment appeared a favourable one for him to intervene in the negotiations without giving offence to the King of France. Louis XIV. had just communicated to him the offers of peace made by the States, assuring him that he would take no notice of them until he knew his wishes in the matter. Charles II. took advantage of this to send Lord Halifax, a member of the Privy Council, the Duke of Buckingham, and the Earl of Arlington, with full powers to the King of France, giving Arlington his private instructions. Having carefully made known to his royal ally 'that he intended to carry on the war whilst distracting the attention of the people with hopes of peace to prevent them from forming leagues in favour of the Dutch,' he commissioned his ambassadors to find out how his nephew was disposed, and whether the two kings could count upon his complicity.

The States of Holland, trusting in the pacific assurances given them by the Duke of Buckingham during his visit to the Hague, yielded to the advice of Van Beuningen, who, in spite of so many disappointments, still clung to the idea of an English alliance. By a secret resolution voted on the report of the commissioners for the Triple Alliance, in whose name Hop, the Pensionary of Amsterdam, spoke, they pronounced themselves in favour of the opening of negotiations with

Charles II.'s ministers. The States-General, to whom they made known their resolution, at once gave their consent, and appointed as their representatives four new plenipotentiaries, Dykveldt, Van Beuningen, Beverningh, and Gokkinga, sending them to the Prince of Orange, who was desired to share the direction of the conference with them. Their instructions obliged them to refuse the cession of any towns or provinces to the King of England, but they were authorised to partially satisfy his pecuniary demands, and to work upon the well-known venality of his ministers by 'greasing the palms of those who might be disposed to serve the interests of the republic.'

Cutting short their sojourn at the Hague, where they had been received with public acclamations as messengers of peace, the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Arlington hastened to the Prince of Orange at the camp of Bodegrave, and arrived there as night was coming on, July 5, 1672. William III. at once made them proposals which he hoped would be favourably received, and summoned to the conference the commissioners of the States-General who had joined him there. The English ambassadors before coming to an explanation asked what offers they might transmit for the satisfaction of Louis XIV. The Prince begged them to persuade the King of France to content himself with Maestricht and the towns on the Rhine. The Duke of Buckingham promised to exert himself in this negotiation, and undertook the charge of the memoir which the Prince of Orange gave him for the King of France, whilst the Earl of Arlington with more sincerity forbore to encourage hopes of concessions. Having taken leave of the new Stadtholder, Charles II.'s two ministers went to Louis XIV., whom they found at the Castle of Zeyst with Lord Halifax and the Duke of Monmouth, who were expecting them. Forced to acknowledge that they would only expose themselves to a refusal by asking the King to modify the conditions of peace which he had notified to De Groot, they made no mention of the Prince of Orange's offers, and preferring to come to an agreement with Louis, hastened to arrange with him the preliminaries of a new treaty. To soften this disappointment to

William III. and show their regard for him as the nephew of their King, they made him an offer calculated to rouse his ambition. They sent two of their suite, Sir Edward Seymour, who became later Speaker of the House of Commons, and Jermyn, a nephew of the Earl of St. Albans, the former confidant of the Queen-Mother, accompanied by Sylvius, the Prince of Orange's messenger. By the terms of their instructions the hereditary sovereignty of the United Provinces was to be offered to William III. if he consented to give up to the King of England, as security for the treaty, those maritime towns which Charles II. demanded: and if, instead of contesting the King of France's conquests, he would put him in possession of the last remaining towns of the Country of the Generality, of which Louis had not yet possessed himself, such as Bois-le-Duc and Maestricht.

The Prince of Orange replied that they made this proposal four-and-twenty hours too late, as he could not violate the oath of fidelity he had just taken to the States of Holland and the States-General in his capacity as Stadtholder and Captain-General. With perfect composure he gave them a letter for Buckingham and Arlington, in which, whilst declining their offer, he thanked them for their proposals in his favour. But when the envoys had retired, he told one of his confidants that he would rather spend the rest of his days in hunting on his German estates than sell his country to France for any price that could be offered.

William III. was too proud to stoop to pick up a shred of power at the price of his honour. When once the destinies of the republic were placed in his hands he became their guardian. Secure in the direction of the government of the United Provinces if he saved their independence, he preferred if possible to remain the head of a State rather than resign himself to being a mere vassal of foreign sovereigns. The resolutions of the States of Holland, necessarily more condensed than the contemporary memoirs, have preserved no trace of the answer made by the Prince of Orange to the offers addressed to him. They merely state, according to a report of Van Beuningen, 'that he had exhibited much

astonishment, as had also the Commissioners of the States; and that he had written to the Duke of Buckingham and to Lord Arlington to ask them 'to make known in writing the two Kings' conditions, that he might reflect upon them.'

The English plenipotentiaries, hopeless of obtaining the complicity of the Prince of Orange, resolved to convince him that he had no further consideration to look for from the two Kings, and that he would find them inseparably united, whether to achieve the ruin of the republic or to force him to submit to the hard terms of a conqueror.

With this object they rejoined Louis XIV., who had left Utrecht and was on his way to Bois-le-Duc, meeting him at the camp of Heeswyck, near Boxtel, and concerted at once with his two ministers, Pomponne and Louvois, how to strengthen by new conventions the engagements of the last treaty of alliance concluded between the two Kings. Charles and Louis entered into a mutual undertaking to make neither peace nor truce with the States-General without each other's consent, to communicate to one another any proposals which might be made to them, and to subordinate peace, not only to the conditions already announced to De Groot by the King of France, but also to the satisfaction of the King of England's demands, the full extent of which he had at last made known.

The terms which Charles II. tried to impose upon the States-General were: the lowering of the Dutch flag before that of England, even by entire fleets meeting a single English vessel in British waters; the repayment of the war expenses, amounting to 1,000,000*l.*; an annual rent of 125,000 florins for the herring fishery on the coast of Great Britain; and the recognition of William III. as sovereign of all that remained of the United Provinces after what might be detached from it for the King of France and his allies, or at any rate, in default of the title of sovereign, the Stadtholdership made hereditary to the family of the Prince of Orange. To insure their execution the King of England demanded that Sluys and the islands of Walcheren, Cadsand, Goeree, and Voorn should be given up to him, thus securing the entrance to Zealand and Holland. Whilst Louis XIV. and Charles II. were congratulating them-

selves on reducing the republic to the last extremities by strengthening their own agreement, the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Arlington desired Sylvius to go to the Prince of Orange and let him know of the treaty which had just been concluded, as well as the conditions to which the States-General must submit to obtain peace, and they requested that his answer might be made known to them within ten days. To take from him any hope of dividing the two Kings, they wrote to him: 'Your Highness will not take it amiss that, having observed how the deputies of the States sent to the two Kings had endeavoured to rouse their jealousy against each other, as if hoping to profit thereby, we are careful to send him a copy of the agreement which we have made with his Most Christian Majesty, by which the States will see how matters stand, and the steps they must take in future if they wish to make peace.'

William III. was making a tour of inspection of the fortifications of Holland when Sylvius rejoined him at Schoonhoven. As he was just sitting down to dinner, Sylvius wished to dissuade him from opening the despatches he had brought him until he had dined, giving him to understand that he would not be much pleased with them. Impatient to know the worst, the Prince broke open the envelope, and having read the letter from Charles's two ministers, as well as the treaty of the two Kings inclosed with it, very nearly threw the papers into the fire in a moment of anger. But he thought better of it, and seeing how he might be compromised by the conditions stipulated in his favour, should the States hear of them indirectly, he hastened at once to the Hague, so as himself to inform them of the communications he had received. On hearing of his arrival the States-General assembled in haste, and having listened to the proposals of peace which he read to them, the deputies asked him his opinion. The Prince of Orange purposely showed little inclination to give it, and thus induced them to be more pressing in seeking it. The Assembly no longer dared to decide for themselves, and wished to follow the course he might indicate. He therefore no longer hesitated to declare that he did not consider the offers of peace as

they were set forth in the letter of the English ministers to be acceptable, and would rather be torn in pieces than subscribe to the conditions imposed. He moreover denounced the provisions made in his favour as those, not of friends, but of enemies.

These proposals were at once remitted for consideration to the commissioners who had been appointed, and with whom the Prince of Orange was required to confer. After having submitted them to the ministers of the Princes allied to the republic—the King of Spain, the Emperor, and the Elector of Brandenburg—who advised their rejection, the commissioners unanimously voted for a continuance of the war.

The next day, the States of Holland, forestalling the States-General, hastened to decide, in conformity with the proposal already made by the deputies of Dordrecht, that they would abide by the opinion of the Stadtholder and the report of the commissioners. They were irresistibly drawn to follow the warlike policy which the Council of Amsterdam constantly encouraged by the most spirited manifestoes, and in favour of which the States of Zealand were at the same time urgently appealing to them. The States-General could not fail to follow this example. They met in the evening, and declared, 'that, in accordance with the very prudent counsel of the Prince of Orange, they considered the conditions proposed by the Kings of France and England so hard and unreasonable that they could never bring themselves to accept them, in spite of their wish for the re-establishment of peace, but that they must defend the State and its inhabitants to the last extremity, and await the relief which it might please God to give them.' 'The Prince of Orange,' writes Colbert de Croissy to Louis XIV., 'has not even deigned to answer the conditions under which your Majesty and the King of England were willing to grant him peace, but he has sent an extract from the register of the deliberations of the States-General to make it known that they refuse to submit to them.'

William III. nevertheless continued to persuade himself that by dint of tact he should eventually get the better of Charles II., and persisting in his illusions he demanded that the negotia-

tions with England might be continued. It was in vain that he sent Van Beuningen to rejoin the English ministers, who on leaving Louis XIV. had gone to Antwerp to embark for London. In vain he learnt that the latter, after having got rid of Van Beuningen, had only gone into the Spanish Netherlands to try and break the alliance of the United Provinces with Spain. Not rebuffed by the failure of the last proposals he had made to them, he did not despair of making Charles II. more tractable, by renewing direct communication with him unknown to the States. He was encouraged by the letters he had received from the King of England through his confidant, Reede van Renswoude. In the first letter Charles seemed to excuse himself for not having told him of the treaty of Heeswyck, which he had just concluded with the King of France, and sought moreover to justify that convention by very insincere allegations. He pretended that he had only put himself in a position of legitimate defence against the enemies of the Prince of Orange, whom he considered as his own; and spared no asseverations to convince him that he would never cease to consider his interests. 'I beg you to believe,' he adds, 'that I have ever the same feeling and the same consideration for you, as much on account of your merits as of the blood which flows in both our veins. I have not forgotten, either, any of the good offices your father did me during his lifetime, the recollection of which will remain ever engraved on my heart.' In the second letter he added to his empty asseverations promises no less illusory, expressed in these terms: 'If you will follow my advice, I have no doubt that I can put you in possession of that power which your ancestors always sought. I hope that as my nephew your ambition is not less.' The Prince of Orange profited by these overtures to try to prevent Charles II. from ratifying the treaty of Heeswyck, by granting him all the advantages that he could possibly desire. When Sylvius returned to London to announce publicly to the King of England the resolution of the States-General, who rejected the latest conditions of peace, William entrusted to him the secret proposals which were to be transmitted to his uncle; and his physician,

Doctor Rumpff, who had his full confidence, was commissioned to bring back the answer. The salute of the flag, the possession of the island of Surinam, an annual rent of 50,000 florins for the right of fishing, an indemnity of 4,000,000 florins for the cost of the war, the cession, as security, of the town of Sluys, and the sovereignty of the Seven Provinces for the Prince of Orange—such were the concessions and guarantees offered to the King of England by William III., according to a minute written by his own hand, if Charles would consent to conclude a separate treaty of peace with the States-General.

Did the Prince of Orange thus exceed the powers given him? Did he show himself thus conciliatory towards Charles II. with a view to obtaining an hereditary throne, instead of the Stadtholdership, which did not suffice him, under the condition only of being recognised as sovereign of the Seven Provinces without having to fear their being divided? He certainly did not disguise how much he wished thus to acquire a kingdom, even by placing himself in dependence on the King of England, when he wrote to Charles that in the event of his Majesty's once making up his mind to break with France he would only have to say how he wished affairs governed. In spite of appearances to the contrary, the Prince of Orange did not therefore hold to a policy of determined resistance, but was ready to lend himself to concessions provided he profited by them. However that may be, it must be acknowledged that the greatest danger threatening the republic was that of dismemberment, which could only be avoided by the rupture of the Anglo-French alliance. By trying to separate Charles II. and Louis XIV. at any price, the Prince of Orange was serving the interests of the United Provinces no less than his own.

The King of England, however, made the persistent advances of his nephew of no avail. Careless of the interests of his kingdom, and preoccupied solely with securing the benefits of the French alliance, he took no heed of the proposals which Sylvius transmitted to him. He not only hastened to make them known to Louis XIV.'s ambassador, but replied to William III. that, intending to remain faithful

to his engagements with the King of France, he should not swerve from his intention of obtaining as security not only Sluys, but the other places he had demanded. 'I claim them,' he wrote, 'for my own safety and equally for yours. I advise you to reflect well on what will happen to you if I have not a firm footing in the country to assist you against the designs and intrigues of those who, finding themselves henceforth debarred from the government they have been used to, are quite ready to call in a foreigner to overturn you and make themselves masters.' Whilst Charles II. was thus denouncing the Prince of Orange's enemies to him as suspected of negotiating a secret understanding with the King of France to regain possession of power, he was himself inviting William III. to be his accomplice by offering to give up to him the towns which would leave the United Provinces at his mercy. William refused to dishonour himself by such treachery. No longer able to disguise from himself that his uncle was irrevocably resolved to make common cause with the King of France, he abandoned for the moment the attempts at an agreement which he had vainly flattered himself would succeed with the King of England, since the Stadtholdership had been re-established in his favour. On the other hand, to put an end ostensibly to his nephew's proceedings, Charles gave permission for the departure of the two ambassadors of the States-General, whom he had kept at Hampton Court in as close confinement as if they had been his prisoners.

Nothing but the approaching meeting of Parliament could force Charles to change his tactics. He had not summoned it since April of the preceding year, in order to avoid the question of declaring war against the United Provinces, and had adjourned it to October 30, 1672, but it seemed that he could no longer avoid calling it together to obtain subsidies necessary for the continuation of the war. By refusing them Parliament would disarm him. The Prince of Orange still held, therefore, to the hope of imposing peace upon Charles II.; and persisting in his projects with a perseverance which no misfortunes could affect, he sent his correspondent, Reede van

Renswoude, to England. Charles at once took measures which rendered this new mission useless. He had all the ports in the kingdom closed under pretext of keeping secret his preparations for landing in Holland, and the Prince of Orange was thus deprived of all communication with his envoy. Scarcely had the latter arrived, moreover, than the King expressed his astonishment at having received no favourable reply to his last letters to his nephew; and wishing to leave no doubt on the matter, he made known to him through Lord Arlington that it would have been better to have dispensed with his voyage. At the same time Charles II. completed the measure of the Prince of Orange's disappointment by proroguing Parliament until February of the following year. Lastly, to leave his nephew no doubt as to his hostile intentions, he filled up his ministry, giving the office of Lord Treasurer to Lord Clifford, the declared enemy of the republic, and replacing the too scrupulous Bridgeman, Keeper of the Seals, by the bolder Ashley, created Lord Chancellor under the title of Earl of Shaftesbury. Ashley was the following year to inaugurate his ministerial functions in Parliament by applying to the United Provinces the words of Cato, '*Delenda Carthago*,' which he proposed to take as the text of his policy. Such was the final result of the Prince of Orange's vain hopes; the confidence which he had obstinately placed in the disposition of the King his uncle had been a delusion to the last. Thus the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership, in spite of the assurances which William III.'s partisans had so loudly given, had not succeeded in breaking the formidable coalition which threatened the independence of the republic. 'England is looked upon with much suspicion by those who had placed such reliance on her,' wrote a correspondent at the Hague to Bernard. It was as if in derision that Charles II. wrote to his nephew, 'that he as well as the King of France would have remained perfectly friendly to the United Provinces, if the deputies of those provinces had not been so backward in confiding to him that authority which his ancestors had so long and so worthily enjoyed.' It mattered little to him that William III. had now been invested with those offices which

belonged to him by right of inheritance; he continued to demand, more for the King of France's benefit than his own, the dismemberment of the United Provinces, without accepting any concession or contenting himself with the offers of submission which his nephew had caused to be made to him. The re-establishment of the Stadtholdership only brought disappointment to those who had expected a great diplomatic success.

Nor did the change of government suffice to give a new aspect to military operations. The appointment of the Prince of Orange could not immediately check the progress of conquest. Although prevented by the inundations from crossing the threshold of Holland, Louis XIV., in spite of the negotiations, did not arrest the victorious march of his army. He had ordered Turenne to continue the campaign in another direction, so as to put the finishing stroke to the submission of the whole of that part of the country comprised between the Meuse and the Wahal, hoping thus to complete the investment of Holland on the south.

The fortress of Nimeguen was in some sort the key to the position, and all the strength of the attack was brought to bear upon it. Well protected by its fortifications, and sufficiently provided to sustain a long siege, the town was defended by a garrison of 4,000 men, and had for governor an able commander, Van Welden, lieutenant-general of cavalry. 'We hope and pray,' writes John de Witt, 'that a steady and determined defence of Nimeguen may repair what has been lost in power and reputation by the sudden surrender of the forts and towns on the Rhine. The burghers and garrison of Nimeguen are resolved to defend themselves gallantly.' Such were the patriotic hopes with which the Grand Pensionary inspired the States of Holland at the last sitting of their Assembly at which he assisted. They were speedily shattered. The fortress of Grave, which might have hampered the assailants by its neighbourhood, had been imprudently abandoned before the garrison had been recalled to defend it. Turenne commenced the investment of Nimeguen without encountering any obstacle. The capture of the fort of Knodsemburg, which

deprived the besieged of any hope of succour from the river side, placed the town at his mercy. Still, not having succeeded in making it capitulate by bombardment, he thought it necessary to lay regular siege to it. As soon as the trenches were opened, he renewed his attacks against the outworks, but was gallantly repulsed by the garrison under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel van Ghent, whose elder brother, Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent, had nobly lost his life in the last naval battle and who was himself mortally wounded. The assault of the ramparts—three times renewed—was not more successful to the besiegers. The destruction of two bastions by undermining, at last gave them an entrance, and the colonels of the regiments in garrison, despairing of being able to defend it, forced the governor to surrender. The siege, which had lasted three weeks, had cost the enemy 1,300 men.

The capture of Nimeguen allowed the French army to draw nearer to Bois-le-Duc, which guarded the entrance to South Holland and North Brabant. To open the road Louis XIV. resolved to isolate the town. With this view he sent Chamilly's division from Maestricht to support that of Turenne, and employed them together for the subjection of the last remaining fortresses of Brabant—Hensden, Crève-cœur, and Bommel—which offered no resistance. It seemed now that the siege of Bois-le-Duc could be opened in all security, and Turenne repaired to the front, where he found Chamilly's division. He was joined by the King of France, who was bringing a portion of his troops from Utrecht, and who took up his head-quarters in the neighbourhood, at Boxtel. About 40,000 men were thus assembled in North Brabant, and the strength of this army corps, as well as the presence of Louis XIV., seemed to foretell to the States-General the continuation of the conquests which had been begun. This fresh blow which the King of France proposed to strike was, however, a failure, and Bois-le-Duc escaped its threatened fate. The garrison had just been reinforced by 1,800 Spanish soldiers; but the governor, Kirkpatrick, whose fidelity and courage were equally to be relied upon, was not even

called upon to offer any resistance, heavy rains, which lasted for four or five days, causing the marshes to overflow, and, isolating it in the midst of the waters, rendering it inaccessible to the enemy, all whose attempts were foiled.

Unable to complete his conquest, as the ground was failing under his feet, unable even to negotiate, since the Prince of Orange had rejected the proposals of peace, Louis XIV. had no further interest in continuing a war whose operations were reduced to reconnoitring and defence, until winter should render the inundations harmless. He gave the chief command of the army to Turenne; the governorship of Utrecht, with a corps of from fifteen to twenty thousand, to Luxembourg, who caused the country to feel cruelly all the evils of an invasion; the governorship of Guelders to Count de Lorge; that of the towns on the Rhine to Count d'Estrades; and sent Chamilly's division to watch Maestricht. He then departed for the camp at Boxtel on July 26 with his household troops, taking the direction of the Spanish Netherlands, which he had asked leave to traverse. The deputies of the States-General accompanied him, so as to reopen the conferences if there were any chance of the proposals of peace being renewed.

After a week's journey the King of France arrived at St. Germain. He was recalled by the necessity for resuming without interruption the direction of the negotiations intended to thwart the alliances being formed in aid of the United Provinces, which threatened him with a dangerous diversion. He wished, moreover, to return to his court in the freshness of his triumph to enjoy the adulation lavished on him. New medals were struck in his honour. One of them represented him mounted on the chariot of the sun passing rapidly through its twelve houses exemplified by twelve of the towns he had conquered. Paris had hitherto wanted such monuments as those with which the capital of the Cæsars had been enriched by its emperors. The capital of France now received its triumphal arch, and the gate of St. Denis was destined to perpetuate the remembrance of the King of France's victories, whilst the paintings in the gallery at Versailles formed an illustrated poem of the campaign which had illuminated his reign.

Louis XIV. had nevertheless been checked in his rapid success. The conqueror had been forced to retire before an unexpected obstacle—the irruption of waters summoned to the defence of the invaded country. Baffled in all directions by an impediment which it could not overcome, the French army had been forced to return to cantonments until the frosts of winter should open the barrier which now defended from invasion the last refuge of the independence of the republic. Being in possession of the advanced posts of Utrecht, Amersfoort, and Naarden, which threatened Holland along her whole line of frontiers, the troops received orders to do nothing further. ‘Think only,’ wrote Louvois to Luxembourg, ‘of keeping the troops under your command in good condition to give battle to the Swedes at Christmas and Candlemas.’

The inundations which the Grand Pensionary De Witt had constantly urged, for which the States of Holland had diligently provided, and of which Amsterdam set a patriotic example, served henceforth as an impregnable rampart against invasion. The Prince of Orange hastened to profit by the new powers confided to him to insure their prompt completion. The waters soon extended over a vast expanse, and ended by reaching Bois-le-Duc, whose resistance contributed to the security of the territory of Holland. The French army was thus kept off wherever it might have forced a new passage. ‘There is no town in Europe,’ writes a contemporary, ‘better fortified than the province of Holland is at this moment.’ It was not by a victory, but by a great sacrifice, that of the soil given up by the inhabitants to be submerged in water, that the republic owed the few months’ respite which gave her time to await better days.

The provinces of Friesland and Groningen, invaded by the King of France’s allies (the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne) and reduced to their own resources, had taken measures to protect themselves. The steady resistance of the town of Groningen had saved them. Friesland, defended by a reserve of about 6,000 men under the command of the valiant Aylva assisted by Colonel Bampfield, was saved by the energy and resolution of the States of the Province. They followed the example of Amsterdam and

had the sluices opened and the dykes broken through. This series of inundations, protected by entrenchments hastily thrown up, rendered their territory unassailable.

The invasion having been thus diverted from its course, the shock fell upon the province of Groningen. The Bishop of Münster, leaving the Elector of Cologne at Deventer, sent his advanced guard under the command of Martel, his commissary-general, to occupy the posts which on the eastern side of Friesland might have arrested his progress. At the same time he despatched a detachment of French cavalry, which he had kept about him as an auxiliary force, to Drenthe, and employed it in investing the town of Coevorden, of which he must necessarily take possession before proceeding into the interior of the country. A week sufficed for the Bishop to become master of it, in spite of the gallant defence of its governor, Lieutenant-Colonel de Burum, who had under his command a strong garrison which was loyally supported by the inhabitants. But he was abandoned by his principal officers, who, as soon as a breach was made, voted for surrender and opened one of the gates of the town to the enemy.

The taking of Coevorden took the heart out of further attempts at resistance; all the towns surrendered with the exception of the little fort of Boulange, situated in the marshes, and commanded by the gallant Captain Prot; and the Bishop of Münster found no difficulty in approaching the town of Groningen, before which he was joined by the Elector of Cologne, and opened siege with an army corps of 22,000 men. The two traitors who had joined his camp—Broersma, the former governor of Coevorden, who, had he not been superseded, would have surrendered that town to the enemy; and Schulembourg, a former deputy of the States of the Province, who was eager to revenge himself for the shame of the sentence he had incurred by his venality—assured him that the town was only waiting a summons to surrender. Groningen once conquered, the two fortresses of Delfzyl and Emden, which commanded the mouth of the Ems, were at the mercy of the enemy, and the river would be open for the

English fleet to land a body of troops, which would insure the complete success of the invasion. Groningen was thus one of the last entrenchments of the republic. Its strategical position enabled it to defend itself. On the northern side it could oppose to all attack an impenetrable line of inundations, which left it in communication with Friesland and, by the Zuyder Zee, with Holland. It was thus secured against a complete investment. The States of the Province had placed it under the care of an able governor, Charles Rabenhaupt, Baron de Sukha, who had left the service of the German Princes for the army of the States-General and had been appointed Lieutenant-General to the Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, the young Prince Henry Casimir of Nassau. He had at his command for the defence of the town 2,000 infantry under the Duke of Holstein, 400 cavalry, and a force of artillery numbering 200 guns. The stores and ammunition left nothing to be desired. The garrison was further strengthened by twenty-two companies of the burghers, comprising 2,000 men, and by a band of 150 students who rendered signal service throughout the siege. The Anabaptists, whose religion forbade the use of arms, undertook to destroy the shells and extinguish the fires.

Ably seconded by the inhabitants, who were themselves encouraged by their wives, Rabenhaupt repulsed with equal decision the insidious negotiations and surprises attempted by the enemy. Reduced to a regular siege, and unable to prevent the garrison from receiving the assistance not only of convoys of provisions and ammunition but of reinforcements of troops from Friesland and Holland, the Bishop endeavoured, without success, to overwhelm the town by the fire of his artillery, throwing in shells, some of which weighed as much as 600 pounds. Checked by the ditches, which the batteries had been unable to destroy, he vainly attempted, at an interval of some weeks, two attacks on the entrenchments and on the fortified posts which defended the dams. Not despairing yet of the success of a final assault, he exhausted all his projectiles in a cannonade which lasted without cessation for five days, but could not check the fire of the town or intimidate

the inhabitants. After a six weeks' siege he was forced to retreat by the losses he had sustained, the desertion of the King of France, and the fear that the army corps of the Elector of Brandenburg was threatening the security of the States. Groningen had made itself impregnable by a defence which was equivalent to a brilliant victory. This conquest having failed, the invasion of Louis XIV.'s allies was checked, and the two provinces which had seemed destined to fall victims to them were preserved to the republic.

But if the heroic resistance of the town of Groningen was to be of avail for the safety of the United Provinces, it was necessary that the fleet should remain mistress of the seas. It had been left under the immediate orders of Ruyter, notwithstanding the appointment of the Prince of Orange as Captain- and Admiral-General for life. Reduced by the naval disarmament to forty-seven men of war, twelve frigates, and twenty fire-ships, her mission was henceforth to protect the shores against a landing which appeared imminent. In fact, whilst England was deluding the States with fallacious negotiations, the enemies' squadrons, collected at the mouth of the Thames to the number of about one hundred and sixty vessels, and carrying on board the troops for landing, commanded by Count Schomberg, suddenly appeared before the mouth of the Meuse, off Brill. They passed without stopping before the beach at Schevening, where they dared not land, and made for the Texel. Ruyter came up in all haste with instructions directing him to avoid a fight and to confine himself to protecting the coast. At the same time the Prince of Orange gave orders to Prince John Maurice of Nassau to send a regiment of cavalry with all speed to the Texel, to the assistance of the companies of burghers and peasants who were gathered there. These defensive measures, supported by the batteries established on the shore, barely succeeded. The English fleet had sailed for the Helder, and their vanguard had been signalled from the shore, but being delayed by the difficulty of sounding they were soon dispersed by a tremendous storm which lasted three days, and was followed for three weeks by violent gales. After sustaining great losses, they were forced to return to the English ports to

re-equip. This retreat was a deliverance for the United Provinces which was looked upon as a sign of Divine protection, and celebrated with prayers and thanksgivings. Relieved from any fears of a landing, the States-General ordered Ruyter to return to Schoonveldt, at the mouth of the Scheldt, where the fleet, protected by the shallows off the coast of Zealand, had no cause to fear any attack.

They were soon required to put to sea again, and it was the States of Holland who managed to profit by their services, in spite of the hesitation and opposition of the other provinces and of the Prince of Orange. Being informed that the India convoy, comprising fourteen vessels with a cargo of 140 tons of gold, representing a value of six or seven million florins, was signalled as entering the North Sea, they immediately asked the States-General to bring the fleet up to the mouth of the Meuse, that they might be within reach of the expected ships. Having, not without difficulty, obtained an order for Ruyter to start, they learned by a letter from Van Oberwecke, who commanded the convoy, the direction which he was happily going to take. He had brought it round by the coast of England and Scotland to the mouth of the Ems, close to Fort Delfzyl, and thus escaped the danger of an encounter. 'Their India fleet,' wrote Arlington, 'passed ours in the night without being seen. This return, by encouraging them, will very likely prevent them becoming more reasonable.' But the India ships were not yet safe. The mouth of the Ems was guarded by no naval force, the English fleet might send in small vessels and fire-ships to destroy them, and thus avenge the disaster at Chatham. Moreover their cargo could not be discharged without danger near the fort of Delfzyl, whose fate was linked to that of the town of Groningen, which was still in a state of siege. If it was reduced to capitulate, the capture of the rich convoy from the Indies became inevitable. The States of Holland consequently proposed to the States-General to give Ruyter orders to meet it, and give it the escort of the fleet into the ports of Holland. The Prince of Orange, to whom the States-General communicated their intention, was of opinion that the naval forces must on no account be risked.

Without opposing Ruyter's departure, he advised the States-General to forbid his giving battle on behalf of the India convoy, and was not to be shaken in his opinion by representations made to him. The deputies of Zealand, exaggerating his caution, refused even to consent to the fleet being moved. Orders and counter-orders followed which might have been fatal and which placed the Admiral in a position of most anxious perplexity. Having arrived in the roadstead of the Texel, according to the last instructions he had received, Ruyter advanced as far as the Ems, whilst the Prince of Orange, uneasy at hearing of the concentration of the landing troops at Dunkirk, persuaded the States-General to recall the fleet at once to the shores of Zealand. The delays purposely created to this resolution by the States of Holland, happily prevented its being received in time. When Ruyter heard of it he had already brought the India convoy off the Texel, where he left it in safety, to return immediately to Schoonveldt, at the mouth of the Scheldt, the position which the Prince of Orange had never authorised him to leave. Three weeks later, the fleet, having more than once weighed anchor, in consequence of false alarms, returned to port. The approach of the stormy season not allowing of any renewed attack on the part of the enemy's squadron, only the frigates and fire-ships remained at sea to defend the mouths of the rivers against any surprise. The privateering which had been hitherto prohibited as injurious to the recruiting of the navy, and which the Prince of Orange with the approval of the States-General now authorised, served to protect the merchant service. The naval war, commenced by the battle of Solebay and terminating with the happy return of the India ships, could not be prolonged, but it had served to insure the safety of the United Provinces. Prepared for by the assiduous care of the Grand Pensionary de Witt, it had been gloriously carried out by Ruyter, nor could its success be attributed to the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership.

The work of deliverance remained none the less to be accomplished, and the undertaking lay henceforth with the Prince of Orange. The difficulties seemed almost insurmount-

able. Three provinces, Guelders, Overijssel, and Utrecht, were detached from the Confederation, and, on the demand of the States of Holland, the right of sitting in the Assembly of the States-General was withdrawn from their deputies, who could for the time being be considered only as subject to the King of France. The means of defence, for which in future Holland must almost solely suffice, seemed to be exhausted and could no longer even furnish the arrears of pay of the troops. It was necessary to have recourse to forced loans. They commenced by doubling the tax of a half per cent. with power to the tax-payer to pay the amount in plate or jewellery, and less the interest of forty per cent. guaranteed by the State. This increased tax seeming too great a burden, a second loan intended to replace the first was demanded on the same conditions, and in the form of a property tax. To collect it the States availed themselves of the information furnished by the Grand Pensionary de Witt, who, far from absenting himself from the sittings of the States since the attempt to which he had nearly fallen a victim, had never ceased to interest himself in public affairs. From 1672 to 1677 the forced loans produced 34,606,783 florins.

The military precautions required no less care, especially in regard to the insufficiency of the troops. The levies of foreign troops, which were with difficulty made up, and the utilising of the last remaining companies of marines and sailors, would not have sufficed for the army required by the Prince of Orange. It was Louis XIV. who actually provided it for the republic. Before returning to France he came to a resolution which proved fatal to his interests. Twenty thousand prisoners at least were in his power. Condé and Turenne advised their being employed in France in the works which were being carried on to make the South of France Canal; Louvois in an evil moment recommended their being released. He, however, proposed to detain the officers, and exacted from the men a heavy ransom, of which the States of Holland complained, but which the King eventually modified. With a generosity that was not without bravado, thinking that he had nothing to fear from the military powers of a nation

which he had so easily conquered, Louis contented himself with two crowns a head for the privates, letting the greater number go without any ransom. It was not long before he repented. 'I took my departure for France,' he wrote in his memoir on the Dutch war, 'having nothing to reproach myself with excepting the extreme indulgence which I showed to nearly twenty thousand prisoners of war by sending them back to Holland, where they formed the principal force which that republic has since employed against me. These unexpected reinforcements were soon augmented by the French deserters who were bought over by the inducement of better pay. 'Prisoners come daily,' writes Prince John Maurice of Nassau, 'to surrender themselves from the garrison of Naarden, so that we shall soon, as they say, have the whole of the Queen's and M. de Turenne's regiment. I am sending notice to them that they will be provided with passports and money to go on their way.' The States-General were enabled also rapidly to increase the number of their troops, which in the following year amounted to 92,000 men; namely, 12,000 cavalry, 2,000 dragoons, and 78,000 foot.

His effective force being made up, the Prince of Orange selected his new commanders for the fortresses which remained to the republic in North Brabant, summoned around him those officers on whom he could rely, though they did not all prove trustworthy, and dismissed those who appeared to be attached to the former government, such as John de Witt's faithful correspondent Colonel Bampffield. He used his power especially to re-establish discipline. The principal officers who had failed in their duty since the commencement of the war were treated with inexorable rigour, a few even being delivered over to the Provost-Marshal; but it was long before these examples of severity could quell the insubordination of the soldiers or the carelessness and neglect of those in command. The powers given to the Prince of Orange could not, however, fail to restore to the defenders of the country that patriotic impulse which had hitherto been wanting. Whilst the confidence which was daily increasing had caused a rise in the funds of the Province of Holland from thirty to ninety-

three florins, the correspondents of the French agent Bernard continually wrote that a determination was shown for a continuance of war, and that nothing less was contemplated than the retaking of Utrecht. 'The burghers and peasants,' they added, 'themselves demand to march under the Prince's orders—those of North Holland undertaking to furnish 30,000 men if he requires them.' Prince John Maurice of Nassau, who still remained in command of the chief position, that of Muyden, remarks upon the revival of patriotism in his correspondence with the Prince of Orange, with the cheerful ardour of a soldier, which his great age had not quelled.

In uniting its destiny to that of the last descendant of its liberators, the republic seemed to have cast aside all faint-heartedness. It felt itself supported by the hopes inspired by William III., looking upon them as services rendered; and in times of great danger such hopes are often the salvation of nations. Still it was not enough for the United Provinces to find a saviour in the Prince of Orange. For the success of their own deliverance they could not dispense with the foreign aid which was fortunately assured to them. Spain, not content with giving them the assistance of her diplomacy, added the most efficient military aid. Beverningh's negotiations had been happily completed by those of the new envoy of the republic, Adrien Paats, councillor of Rotterdam. The Court of Madrid not only sent a first reinforcement of 1,800 cavalry, which it placed at the disposition of the States-General, but gave full powers to Count de Monterey to dispose of all the troops in the Netherlands in their favour. Twelve thousand men, under the command of Count de Marsin, were sent either to the Prince of Orange's army or to the towns in North Brabant and the fortresses of Zealand, in spite of the complaints and remonstrances of the English ministers. It was in vain that the latter appealed to Count de Monterey at Antwerp: they could neither intimidate him, nor obtain his connivance in the perfidious suggestions of which the envoys of the republic at Brussels hastened to inform the States-General. The Court of Spain now looked upon the defence of the United Provinces as inseparable from the preservation of the Netherlands.

When in conformity with her bold advice the States had repulsed Louis XIV.'s proposals of peace, Spain was encouraged to make a still more determined stand and showed herself favourable to offers of an offensive alliance, but another year elapsed before she brought matters to a conclusion.

The negotiations were carried out with no less solicitude at the Court of Vienna, and thanks to the active intervention of Lisola, they were successful in spite of the treaty of neutrality signed by the Emperor Leopold I. with the King of France. After conferences prolonged at the Hague for several weeks, under the direction of the States-General's secretary Fagel, an agreement was made, by which the Emperor treating directly with the United Provinces was to furnish them, in return for certain subsidies, with a contingent of 24,000 men instead of 12,000 for which he had already agreed with the Elector of Brandenburg. He also undertook to call for a general armament in the empire, which was at once voted for by the Diet of Ratisbon. The French diplomatists flattered themselves that they could prevent the ratification of this agreement by manœuvring in Vienna to get Lisola accused of having exceeded his instructions, but they only succeeded in having the treaty delayed. After long-contested counter-propositions it was put into execution, but only towards the end of the year 1672.

Fortunately for the United Provinces, the negotiations previously concluded with the Elector of Brandenburg had already insured them the intervention necessary to their welfare. Not only had Frederick William agreed to furnish a body of 20,000 men, but he had obtained by the treaty of Berlin the assistance of a contingent of 12,000 soldiers of the Imperial troops, of which he persistently claimed an increase. The most urgent appeals were made to him to hasten his assistance: 'Your Electoral Highness alone can help us,' wrote the Prince of Orange to him, 'and for my part I can assure you that I will do my best to maintain our posts.'

The last attempt of Count de la Vauguyon, Louis XIV.'s minister at Berlin, failed before the henceforth irrevocable determination of the Elector. 'On August 6,' writes a con-

temporary, 'a report was spread in Woerden which filled the despairing inhabitants with joy, namely that a large number of auxiliary troops were arriving from Germany, which only served to confirm the old saying, *Quod Germanorum auxilia sunt lenta*. While the Imperial troops assembled at Egra, on the extreme frontier of Bohemia, were setting out on their march under the command of the finest general in the empire, Count de Montecuculi, who had conquered the Turks at Saint Gothard, the Elector of Brandenburg took up the command of his army corps, which was encamped on the outskirts of his dominions.

The allied contingents then manœuvred to approach one another, as if, as Louvois scornfully observed, they were coming to be beaten on the shores of the Rhine. The United Provinces by a prompt and united effort might look for a reinforcement of 40,000 well-equipped and well-armed men, which should suffice to place the French army in its turn in jeopardy. The hopes inspired by their near approach, of which D'Amerongen, the States' envoy at Berlin, spoke with patriotic enthusiasm, were but insufficiently realised. In consequence of the secret understanding which the French Government had contrived with Prince Lobkowitz, the Emperor's Prime Minister, the two army corps merely marched and counter-marched on the opposite side of the Rhine without daring to cross it. Neither did the Prince of Orange seem in a hurry to take the necessary measures to insure their prompt co-operation, in spite of the reiterated complaints of the Elector. Their inaction prevented the immediate deliverance of Holland, but their attempt at a diversion nevertheless sufficed to change the theatre of war. Whilst the French King's allies, the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne, whose States were threatened by the German troops, found themselves reduced to stand on the defensive, Louis XIV. was obliged to despatch Turenne to guard the Rhine, and would soon be forced to send an army corps into Lorraine under the command of Condé. The intervention of Germany forced upon him the necessity of dividing his forces, when their concentration was indispensable to enable him to complete

the subjection of the United Provinces. He was obliged to arrest his conquests until the day came when he had no resource left but to abandon them. The first foreign aid given to the republic had thus served to release it by turning the stream of the French invasion, and it was to the alliances brought about by the political foresight of the Grand Pensionary de Witt, rather than to the change of government just accomplished, that she was to owe her deliverance.

CHAPTER XIV.

REACTION IN FAVOUR OF THE ORANGE PARTY—ITS VICTIMS—
ASSASSINATION OF JOHN DE WITT AND HIS BROTHER.

The Prince of Orange considers his powers insufficient—His partisans wish him to have the right of appointing the town magistrates—Meeting between Fagel and De Groot—Popular seditions—The States of Holland apply in vain to the Stadtholder—William III. endeavours to inspire doubts of them—Prosecution of Montbas—His escape—He offers his services to the King of France—Persecution directed by the Prince of Orange against De Groot, who is forced to leave the country—John de Witt surrounded by his family—He refuses to leave the Hague—Accusations formed against him—Correspondence of Louvois and of Luxembourg—No charge made against John de Witt of complicity with the enemy—Calumnious reports against his morality and probity—His memoir in justification approved by the States—He appeals in vain to the Prince of Orange—Ingratitude of William III.—His answer to John de Witt's letter—Cornelius de Witt is exposed to the same enmity as his brother—His domestic life—His correspondence with his wife, Maria van Berkel, during the last naval campaign—His services unrecognised—His arrest—He is accused of a plot against the Prince of Orange—Infamy of his accuser Tichelaer—Intervention of the deputies of Dordrecht in his favour—The Prince of Orange refuses to give an opinion—Cornelius de Witt transferred to the prison of the Court of Justice—Futile endeavours of John de Witt to obtain his brother's release—His correspondence with his sister-in-law—His visit to the Prince of Orange; he offers to send in his resignation as Grand Pensionary—His speech to the States of Holland—His appointment to the Grand Council—Ill-will of the Prince of Orange—Resignation of John de Witt—His letter to Ruyter—He is replaced by Fagel—Continuation of the trial of Cornelius de Witt—His imprisonment—His correspondence with his wife—Ineffectual pleas in defence—His judges and his trial—Pretext found for putting him to torture—Official report of the resolutions of the Court—Last interrogatories—Last applications—Cornelius de Witt tortured—His heroic behaviour—Refuses to confess—His iniquitous condemnation—He refuses to accept it—John de Witt summoned by his brother to the prison—Meeting between the two brothers—John de Witt is detained a prisoner—Plot of Tichelaer—Popular tumult—The councillor-deputies and the measures for defence—The troops of cavalry commanded by Count Tilly—Arming of the burgher companies—First parleys of councillor-deputies with the rioters—Seditious behaviour of the burgher companies—They send delegates to the prison—

Valiant resistance of Count Tilly—He is ordered to retire—The assassins—Verhoef at the Town Hall—The prison broken into—Preludes to the massacre—John and Cornelius de Witt dragged out by their murderers—Their assassination—Brutal treatment of their dead bodies—Their interment—Horror of the public—John de Witt's children placed in safety: his aged father survives him—Strength of mind of Cornelius de Witt's widow—Christian and patriotic sentiments of his family—John de Witt's papers—Justice is done to him—The share of responsibility incurred by the Prince of Orange—Suspensions roused against him—Contradictory accounts of his sentiments—He goes reluctantly to the Hague—Refuses to prosecute—His consideration and favour to the culprits—Persecution of the friends of the victims—Dangers to which Ruyter is exposed—New powers given to the Prince of Orange: services rendered to him by Fagel—Change of magistracies—Subjection of the States of Holland—William III. the liberator of the United Provinces—External decay of the republic—It preserves a liberal government, for which it is indebted to John de Witt.

WILLIAM III. had been put into possession of the powers of his ancestors before he reached the age of twenty-two, not only to repair the evils of a foreign war, but to restore internal peace. Whilst nobly devoting himself to the patriotic work of defence, and taking advantage of the measures already in use to arrest the invasion, his authority failed him to quell the popular tumult and to arrest its violence. Although the States of Holland, who were as much in his favour as the States-General, had given up to him with the conduct of the negotiation the direction of all military operations, and had thus given proof of their confidence, he offered no opposition to the frenzy of the political reaction, which he rather seemed to encourage. He might have prevented John de Witt and his brother from becoming victims of persecution and assassination; he did nothing to save them, and allowed the accomplishment of the tragedy which was to stain with blood the beginning of his Stadtholdership. He was not content with the satisfaction of his ambition; and the powers with which he had been invested seemed to him insufficient so long as the nomination of the members of the town councils, which had belonged to his predecessors, was withheld from him. In spite of the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership, the right of recruiting themselves at their own free choice had been left to the magistrates.

The States of Holland were the more anxious to leave

them this important prerogative, that it was the foundation of the burgher and municipal oligarchy of which they themselves were the representatives. In fact the magistrates elected as their delegates the deputies of the States, and if these latter had not hitherto chosen that the nomination should be left to the Prince of Orange, it was because they did not wish him to become master of the Assembly.

William III.'s partisans did not consider the revolution which had just taken place as at an end, as long as it was not in his power to provide for the replacing of the town councils. The Stadtholdership as conferred by the States of Holland was a disappointment to them. They wished the new Stadtholder to be invested not with his lawful share only of power, but to take it by force entirely into his own hands. Their vexation was manifested in the interview which took place between De Groot and the secretary of the States-General, Fagel, who was in the Prince of Orange's confidence.

Meeting De Groot in the gallery leading from the hall of the States-General to that of the States of Holland, Fagel, according to the testimony of a contemporary writer, addressed him with these remarkable words, which would be inexplicable did they not reveal how deeply he regretted that the States of Holland should themselves have legally changed the government of the republic: 'You, no doubt, imagine,' he said to him, 'that by nominating the Prince of Orange as Stadtholder of the province you have made a coup d'état. But I would have been cut in pieces rather than consent.' 'He would have preferred,' adds Wicquefort, 'that the Prince should owe his advancement to the frenzy of an excited populace rather than to the lawful choice of the deputies of Holland.'

It was in vain that the States offered the Prince of Orange a pledge of their submission by tearing up the register of the Perpetual Edict, each leaf of which was restored to the deputies of the towns who had signed it. It was in vain that the magistrates of Amsterdam burnt the Act by which, five years previously, they had equally engaged to maintain intact that fundamental law of the State. Their protestations of fidelity and obedience, the overtures made to William III. by Hœufft,

the burgomaster of the town, with a view to supporting his nomination as hereditary Count of Holland, and the proposals of the deputies of Dordrecht that the States should promote his marriage and his choice beforehand of a presumptive heir to insure the continuation of the dynasty of the Princes of Orange, did not suffice to allay the passions of the populace.

Certain of impunity, they gave themselves up to violence and rebellion to obtain the dismissal of those magistrates suspected by the Orange party. At Rotterdam the captains of the burgher companies, having formed themselves into a council of war, demanded the arrest of the principal members of the magistracy who were accused of treason—amongst others Van der Aa and De Groot—with exclusion from the magistracy for their descendants. To shield them from the fury of the populace, they had to be guarded in the Town Hall. At Gouda, the peasants, objecting to the inundations, forced the gates of the town and kept the magistrates imprisoned for over twenty-four hours. The suspicions of connivance with the enemy, which were spread on all sides, kept up mistrust and increased the disorder. At Schiedam a false report that the subsidies had not been sent to the Elector of Brandenburg roused the mob, the council chamber was filled with angry women, the burgomaster, Pesser, was insulted, and his house pillaged.

Hatred and vengeance were let loose, more especially against the family of the Grand Pensionary; whilst his brother-in-law Deutz, one of the richest inhabitants of Amsterdam, not feeling himself any longer secure there, was obliged to seek refuge at Haarlem, and his first cousin Ascanius van Sypesteyn, bailiff of Broderode, head of the commissariat, was marked out by his relationship for the enmity of the people. A rumour having spread that the Grand Pensionary had left the Hague to demand hospitality of him, his house was ransacked before the archers of the town arrived to defend it. At Dordrecht, Cornelius de Witt, his brother-in-law Beveren de Zwynrecht, the burgomaster Halling, and four other magistrates, were threatened with death if they did not resign

their offices. The burgomaster's house was pillaged, and the peasants, who were assembled round the town to the number of 3,000, wished by fresh deeds of violence to avenge themselves for the inundation of their fields. 'The friends of MM. de Witt are thinking of leaving the country,' was written to the French agent Bernard. According to another contemporary witness, 'there were people who, considering foreign rule as being less intolerable than anarchy, and that the tyranny of the mob was the most insupportable of all rules, would have preferred to submit to France rather than remain exposed to the insolence of an enraged and excited rabble.'

The States of Holland, who had flattered themselves that they could put an end to the civil dissensions by re-establishing the Stadtholdership, found themselves deceived in their hopes. Uneasy as to the fate which still threatened the members of the magistracy, they resolved to invite the Prince of Orange to take upon himself the office of peacemaker. In answer to their appeal, William III. published a circular in which he exonerated the town magistrates from all accusation of treason, demanding their protection, ordering that all those who had been arrested should be set at liberty, and enjoining the inhabitants 'to avoid, as an attempt against his authority, all tumultuous meetings and acts of violence.' This letter, which was at once denounced as a piece of complaisance and even as a forgery, did not suffice to intimidate the rioters. The States endeavoured to supplement it by publishing a notice against the fomenters of the disturbance, and by ordering the arrest of the leaders of the rebellion, at Rotterdam, Haarlem, and Dordrecht, as well as of those who had headed the resistance against the work of inundation.

Uneasy at the continuance of these disorders, before the States separated for a few days they made a fresh appeal to the Prince of Orange, sending him three members of the Assembly, Van Beuningen, Van den Tocht, and Van der Graef, to urge him to carry on in his own name the prosecutions which they had themselves directed. William III. evaded this request and replied that he had no power to repress, by severe penalties, revolts which were headed by the principal citizens. He advised

them to appoint deputies to whom they could give full powers for the re-establishment of order wherever it had been disturbed. This would have been to send them to certain death, and the States, without rejecting the idea, declared that the Prince alone could put it into execution by himself heading the deputation. But the Stadtholder objected the necessity of his presence with the army.

Fresh entreaties renewed a few days later remained useless. The Prince of Orange replied that, the troops being necessary for the defence of the frontier, he could not employ them in the interior, and that consequently the only method to adopt was that of kindness and moderation. He only interfered to prevent any attempt at repression, and fearing that the States might apply to Colonel van Beveren, who commanded the garrison of Amsterdam, he removed him and placed him at the disposal of Major-General Wurtz. He was anxious to disarm the States of Holland, and seemed rather to rejoice in their powerlessness than to be uneasy at it.

His conduct justified the prevision of those who had always doubted his sincerity. The publicity given to the letter which he had just received from the King of England confirmed their suspicions. Writing confidentially to his nephew, for the purpose of deceiving him by continued asseverations of personal good-will which he pretended to feel towards him, Charles II. declared 'that the constant and insolent machinations of which the Prince of Orange was the victim at the hands of those who had formerly so great a share in the government of the republic, had obliged him to ally himself with the King of France for the sole purpose of lowering their pride.' Not content with this false allegation, he added that he was waiting to try and reconcile the King of France to the republic, 'until affairs were in such a condition that it would no longer be in the power of the same violent faction to destroy or set aside what had been done for the Prince of Orange.'

William III. had quickly seen the advantage he might derive from this correspondence in hastening the downfall of

those whom he thought he still had to fear. He took his measures for making use of it against them without compromising himself. 'I send you,' he writes to Fagel, 'the letter which I have just received from the King of England; you can communicate it or not as you think best.' He knew well that Fagel could not fail to make it known, to the great detriment of his adversaries. The Prince of Orange had so astutely calculated the force of the blow which would fall upon them that a month later, on the very day of the assassination of John de Witt and his brother, one of Bernard's correspondents announced as inevitable the resumption and success of the negotiations. 'The King of Great Britain will now,' he writes, 'be the one to think of peace, as he promised in his last letter to the Prince of Orange that he would do his best with the King of France, as soon as the faction which opposed him should be incapacitated from injuring him.'

To achieve the ruin of his adversaries, the Prince of Orange chose as victims those whom he could deliver over to the hatred of the populace. He had at first contemplated making Montbas responsible for the disasters of the war by taking his abandonment of the post which had been confided to him of guarding the Rhine as a premeditated act of treachery, although according to the report of the deputies to the camp his precipitate retreat could only be attributed to a misunderstanding. Withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Council of State—to which he was amenable as general officer—to be brought before a court-martial, Montbas, after having in vain pleaded that he had been deprived of his means of defence, was degraded from his military office and declared incompetent to hold any command. The Prince of Orange not being satisfied with this verdict and having refused to sanction it, a fresh sentence was pronounced by the court-martial, condemning the accused to fifteen years' imprisonment. This sentence still did not satisfy him, and he again referred the examination to the lawyers, declaring that from the nature of the accusation brought against Montbas his judges had only to choose between an acquittal or capital punishment. Montbas could no longer doubt the fate reserved for him, 'having

enemiés,' as was written to John de Witt the day after his arrest, 'who only sought to deprive him of life and honour.' He bribed his guards and succeeded in escaping. Eager to exonerate himself, he applied in vain to the States-General to get commissioners appointed who could give him security of their impartiality, and before whom he undertook to appear. Not having been able to obtain this satisfaction, and driven to desperation by the confiscation of his property, Montbas, giving up all thought of his renown, offered his services in turn to the Prince of Condé, with whom he placed himself in communication at Arnheim directly after his escape, and to the Duke of Luxembourg, whom he joined at Utrecht, proposing to them both 'to facilitate the means of attack.' 'I have been desired by his Majesty,' wrote Louvois to Luxembourg, 'to write to M. de Montbas that he will pardon him on condition that in going to you he will assist you, by all the means in his power, both to harass the enemy at their posts and to sow dissensions amongst them. Montbas would have needed no pardon for having served against the King of France, whose subject he was by birth, if Louis XIV. had found in him an accomplice. He only made common cause with the invaders of the republic to revenge himself for the persecution to which he had been subjected. His conduct was none the less that of a traitor, and when he wrote to the Prince of Orange to ask his permission to call out the four general officers who had conducted his trial, the latter was justified in returning his letter by the Provost-Marshal.

William III. was implacable in his determination to ruin Montbas—even going the length of persecuting his wife, who had taken refuge in Brussels—because in striking him he also attained his brother-in-law De Groot, whom he could not forgive for being John de Witt's devoted friend, and one of the most faithful servants of the States' Government. In vain did De Groot, who had had no voice in the Perpetual Edict, show during his embassies in Sweden and France the most conciliatory disposition towards the appointment of the Prince of Orange, whether as Councillor of State or as Captain-General. In vain

did he show his deference to the new Stadtholder by becoming a member of the deputation of the States of Holland when they went to congratulate the Princess-Dowager on the position given to her grandson; he could not overcome an enmity which had become implacable.

It was De Groot's high position that gave special umbrage to William III. Possessing the confidence of the States of Holland and of the States-General, who had given him full powers to negotiate with the King of France, he had just been summoned to replace the Grand Pensionary, whose wounds kept him away from the Assembly of State, and had been commissioned to act for him in the States-General 'in the matter of the Triple Alliance, and in military and naval affairs.' The power thus given to him, and the consideration which Louis XIV. never ceased to manifest towards him in spite of the war entered upon between France and the republic, gave the Prince of Orange reason to fear that De Groot would sooner or later contrive to have the negotiations renewed when war was necessary to the new Stadtholder to confirm his power. De Groot had, it is true, protested against the merciless conditions which Louis XIV. wished to impose upon the States, but William III. nevertheless considered him as the principal representative of the peace party, and he was determined to deprive him of the power of hindering his design.

To destroy his credit William endeavoured to rouse suspicions against him. Summoned to the Assembly of the States-General to express his opinion as to the offers of peace made to the United Provinces by the Kings of France and England, he refused to give it unless certain members whom he pointed out were ordered to leave the hall. When the deputies of Holland retired to confer with the States of their province, he stated that 'the person who imposed silence upon him being no longer present, he could declare himself and advise the unqualified rejection of the proposals.' Expressly asked by the States of Holland to point out the deputy whom he suspected, the Prince of Orange, after some apparent hesitation, made up his mind to name De Groot. He stated that he felt it right to give his reasons, and reproached him with

having exceeded the limit of his powers in his negotiations with the King of France. He thus encouraged the accusations of his enemies, amongst whom was Fagel, the secretary of the States-General, who fearing to find in him a rival had stirred up against him in the Assembly of the States of Holland as his chief adversary, his nephew Michael ten Hove, recently appointed Pensionary of Haarlem.

Irreproachable as had been his conduct, which was moreover in conformity with the instructions of the States of Holland, De Groot, when he heard of Montbas' flight, realised at once the dangers which threatened himself. Although he had never compromised himself in his intercourse with his brother-in-law, he foresaw that this escape must inevitably expose him to political aspersions.

A report of his arrest was already spreading. 'M. de Groot has been arrested with his wife and children,' says a letter to Bernard, 'and they will be brought here as prisoners.' Fortunately De Groot, who, as he expresses it, 'had a particular dislike to murders and massacres, especially such as were attempted against his own person,' had placed himself out of reach of his enemies by retiring to the Spanish Netherlands. 'May God forgive those who are the cause of the step I have been forced to take for my own safety.' He ends his letter, which was addressed to the States of Holland, by assuring them that 'he would never violate the fidelity he owed them by acts which might harm the interests of his country, or injure his own reputation.' He thus guarded against any idea that he might follow the criminal example of Montbas, to whom he did not spare his condemnation. But the persecution from which he was flying did not leave him long in the enjoyment of that peace which he sought by a voluntary exile. Deeply afflicted by the death of his wife, 'whom he loved above all things, and whose love rendered him insensible to all other misfortunes,' and obliged to leave Antwerp, where his residence gave offence to the Prince of Orange, he sought a refuge at Cologne. Four years later, when he ventured to return to the Hague, William III. in his implacable hatred

instituted proceedings against him, but could not prevent his being honourably acquitted.

The prosecution of Montbas and the iniquities committed against De Groot coincided with the attacks which were directed with such hostility against John and Cornelius de Witt, both of whom had remained within reach of the blows of those enemies to whom they were about to fall victims. Prevented from continuing in the exercise of his office by the attempt to which he had nearly succumbed, and reduced to an inaction which did not disarm the hatred of his adversaries, the Grand Pensionary was living surrounded by his family at his residence on the Kneuterdijk, close to the palace of the States and the prison of the Court of Justice. His aged father and his sister Joanna de Zwyndrecht lived there with him as well as his other brother-in-law and his sister-in-law, the wife of Bicher van Swieten, who occupied another part of the house. His eldest daughter, Anna, was at home as well as his young sons when he entered his house covered with blood from the wounds which he had received in his struggle with the assassins. She assisted her aunts in their attendance on her father during his convalescence. As to the other daughters of the Grand Pensionary, he had, as if with a secret presentiment of his approaching end, desired that they might be brought back to him from Amsterdam, where they had been under the care of their mother's sisters. As soon as he began to recover he wrote to his brother-in-law, Peter de Graeff, to beg him to bring them back to the Hague, giving notice that he should send his carriage half-way to meet them. After a delay of a few days, to enable their uncle Bicker van Swieten to accompany them, they returned to their father's house to complete the family circle which he was not much longer to enjoy. Although John de Witt's career as a statesman seemed ended with the fall of that government of which he was First Minister, and which was swept away in the midst of public misfortunes to make way for that of the Prince of Orange, he could not escape the fate which threatened him. He awaited it with calm resignation. 'I would rather suffer injustice than commit it,' he replied to one of his friends, who

urged upon him the necessity of saving his life by revenging himself upon those who wished to ruin him. He showed neither emotion nor indignation at the passions aroused against him, and only said mournfully, pointing to his head, 'I carry the means of paying on my shoulders.' He was one of those men who sacrifice both popularity and life, hoping for no other return than the testimony of their own conscience and justice from history. His friends had advised him to escape from his persecutors by going away, and a rumour of his speedy departure had already spread. Five days after his attempted assassination they urged him to ask permission of the States to retire to some quiet spot where rest would assist in the healing of his wounds. The refuge offered to him was no doubt either near Amsterdam, in the residence belonging to his brother-in-law, De Graeff, at Ilpendam, or at Haarlem in the old country house of his uncle, Van Sypesteyn, where he had spent such happy days in his youth. But he did not listen to their advice. Too proud to let it be thought that he feared danger, he would have preferred that the States should take the initiative, and propose to him to give up his office, if only for a time. While dangers threatened him he considered that duty held him to his post. Jacob van den Bosch, who was afterwards Pensionary of Amsterdam and who knew of the warning given to the Grand Pensionary, had not the courage to speak of it; on the other hand, the friend who had recommended De Witt to go away could find no deputy who had either courage or influence enough to suggest to the States that they should request him to take steps for his own safety. It was necessary, therefore, to give up any hope of a leave of absence which would have enabled John de Witt to await at a distance from his enemies his restoration to health and the return of better days. The Grand Pensionary remained, therefore, in the breach until the day when he gave his enemies the prey they coveted, that of his corpse.

The most abominable accusations were made against this faithful and incorruptible servant of the State, pointing him out as a traitor. The correspondence between Luxembourg and Louvois, published about a century later, offers, it is true,

an apparent justification of these false charges, but upon examination it is easy to see that the honour and patriotism of John de Witt are unassailable. The plot to restore the government to the party opposing the Stadtholdership, in consideration of an agreement with the enemy, seems to have been, if not invented, at any rate wilfully exaggerated by Luxembourg, who was interested in its being believed. On July 24 Louvois wrote to him from the head-quarters before Bois-le-Duc: 'No better reply than yours could have been given to him who spoke to you on behalf of M. de Witt. Continue thus, and, without committing yourself in writing, let him understand that the King will willingly forget the past ill-conduct of his friend, and would not be sorry to see him once again in the saddle. You may add that any proposals made with a view to enabling him to set his affairs to rights will be readily listened to, provided that on his side he helps the King to an advantageous peace. If M. de Witt chooses upon this footing either to enter into the matter personally or to send some one who can be talked to openly, he will be very well received, and he may feel certain that no one will know of any negotiation he may enter into with the King.'

Three days later Luxembourg wrote to Louvois from Utrecht: 'I shall see one of M. de Witt's friends to-night, and shall offer him every possible service on behalf of M. de Witt, for which I have the King's authority. I think it cannot but have a good effect, but you will let me know the wishes of his Majesty concerning my conduct in this matter. I have given those who are well disposed towards us to understand that our support will restore them and cast down the Prince of Orange.' It was no doubt to gain to himself the credit of having persuaded them that he winds up his letter in these terms, with a doubtful tone which is not usual to him: 'They have half promised to help me to a victory, provided the conditions are regulated with M. de Witt, or even if they see that things are in a fair way towards that end.' Such testimony is certainly suspicious. In fact it mattered little to Luxembourg whether his information was true or not: he knew he could not better

pay his court to the all-powerful minister than by showing himself in the light of an assiduous newsmonger. 'Never tell me things by halves,' wrote Louvois to him, 'and however slight the foundation of any matter put before you may seem, always let me know of it. The King cannot be too well informed of what is going on, of whatever nature it may be.' Acting in conformity with these instructions, therefore, Luxembourg had little need to trouble himself as to the truth of his news, even if he risked giving credit to the false reports which he received. Thus in the very letter in which he tells Louvois of his secret interviews with a friend of John de Witt, he gives him the erroneous information that the Grand Pensionary had been arrested in his abode at the Hague.

A few days later, when William III. was thinking of nothing but increasing his army, he wrote to Louvois, without troubling himself about the truth, 'that he had just received notice that the Prince of Orange had disbanded 150 companies of cavalry and infantry.' We must not, therefore, trust to the sincerity of the communications by which Luxembourg tried to gain credit for himself. At any rate the offers of agreement which he received might be easily explained by the position in which magistrates, tradesmen, and all respectable people found themselves. In fact, according to the information of Stouppa, another of Louvois' correspondents, 'the latter sought in peace with France for a guarantee not only against popular seditions, but also against the dominion of the King of England, which would have allowed Charles II. to destroy the power of the republic by making himself master of its commerce. However that may have been, there is no mention in any of Luxembourg's letters of John de Witt having taken the slightest part personally in these secret negotiations; they rather show that he refused to do so, and thus contribute to complete his justification. 'M. de Witt's friend here,' writes Luxembourg, 'has as yet received no answer, because the person who went to the Hague was not sent to the Grand Pensionary, it was to a cousin of the said M. de Witt, who is away on a short journey, but is expected back any day.' 'The individual who went to seek M. de Witt has not yet returned,' he says in another

letter, and in the following one he makes a declaration which effectually removes all doubt: 'The truth is that M. de Witt has detained the messenger I was expecting.' Thus, on the Duke of Luxembourg's own statement, the conduct of the Grand Pensionary gives no opening for accusing him of any intelligence with the enemy; and admitting that proposals were made to him for the re-establishment of his authority, there is irresistible proof that he took no notice of them. From this point of view his conduct may be advantageously compared with that of the Prince of Orange, who had kept up a secret correspondence with his uncle Charles II. in which, to bring about a rupture of the alliance between the Kings of England and France, he stipulated on his own behalf for the sovereignty of the Seven Provinces. As to John de Witt, he never yielded to the temptation of a secret negotiation with Louis XIV. for the purpose of restoring the fortunes of the republican party, of which he was the head, and which had been deprived of the government.

Having done everything in his power to prevent or arrest the invasion, the Grand Pensionary lent himself to no projects of agreement with the invaders. He was too earnest in the execution of his duty to be rendered unfaithful by any wrongs of which he might have to complain. He was none the less accused of betraying his trust. No attack was spared him. His austere and irreproachable habits did not secure him against the calumnies which imputed to him criminal relations with the wife of one of the nobles of Holland, Catherine de Zuydland, who had married Wyngærden, Lord of Werkendam, minister of the States in Denmark. His probity was no more respected than his patriotism. The simplicity of his life, the moderation of his tastes, the disinterestedness of which he had given such constant proof by contenting himself for long with so insufficient a salary, could not disarm the implacable resentment of party spirit. Although he had invested all his money in land or in the public funds, so as to make it inseparable from that of the State, he was nevertheless denounced as being guilty of misappropriation, and a report was spread that he had sent money purloined from the Treasury to Venice, that he might

take up his residence in that town after the conquest of the United Provinces. The numerous pamphlets which held him up to the hatred of his fellow-citizens were distributed openly under his very eyes. He had hitherto only met them with scorn. But in one of these libels, entitled 'Advice to all good and faithful subjects of the Netherlands,' he found the double accusation, that he had betrayed his country by leaving it without defence and had appropriated yearly a sum of 80,000 florins from the secret service money, so categorically stated that he thought himself obliged to break silence. The States had already taken the initiative by ordering the Court of Holland to commence judicial proceedings against the author of a pamphlet which they did not intend to leave unpunished. Two days later, at the request of the Grand Pensionary, they summoned their councillor deputies who had charge of the finance department of the Province, to examine his accounts and refute the injurious allegations of the pamphleteers. To silence them De Witt thought it well himself to present his justification to the States. 'Although I have always considered,' he writes to them, 'that such calumnies cannot be better put down than by scorning them and showing how little they affect one, still, as this time a formal accusation has been brought against me of having during my term of office misappropriated the money intended for secret correspondence, and of thus having robbed the State; having also heard it said on different sides that if this were not true its falseness would be made apparent; and not being, on account of my wounds, in a condition to appear in person before your High and Great Mightinesses, I have thought it well to send you such evidence as may prove the truth.' He began by pointing out that the funds from which he was accused of yearly misappropriating 80,000 florins never exceeded 24,000 florins, and that he had scarcely ever spent more than 6,000 florins. He proved, moreover, by the same evidence that although he had the direction of the secret correspondence he had never consented to receive the money intended to pay the expenses of that service, 'having always reflected on the suspicious temper of the people.' At the same time he made over to his

near relation Vivien, who represented him, a long memorial addressed to the members of the Assembly, in which the state of his fortune was clearly set out. In it he proudly defended himself, declaring that he had always considered the affairs of the State before his own.

He represented that he had never possessed land, money, shares, or credit—not so much as a halfpenny—outside the United Provinces; and, what was more, that all his property and capital, as well as that of his children, for whom he had purchased in the last loans a life annuity to the amount of 600 florins, was in the banks of Holland. 'My welfare,' he added, 'is thus closely linked with that of the State, and I am convinced that there is no one in the entire republic who has more thoroughly identified his good and evil fortune with that of the State than I have done, so much so that it is an established fact that I must fall and perish with Holland.' This testimony which he so eloquently rendered to himself touched the States of Holland. They hastened to ask the councillor deputies for the conclusion of their report, which the latter had not yet made known. Two days later the councillor deputies unanimously agreed that 'the Grand Pensionary had never received the secret service money,' and the next day the States solemnly registered this declaration.

But one voice only could make itself heard amidst the tumult of passion which had been aroused against John de Witt, that of the Prince of Orange. The Grand Pensionary therefore made up his mind to appeal to him, and to invoke his testimony as to the iniquity of the accusation against which he had to defend himself. The letter which he sent him has not been found. He had imparted it to Beverningh, who had remained at the camp with the Prince of Orange and whose intervention he requested. 'The odious calumnies which are daily vented against me in this province and elsewhere,' he writes to him, 'have obliged me to write at once to the Prince of Orange. I send you a copy of my letter, and I take it for granted that you will interest yourself in what may so cruelly compromise my reputation. Consequently I take the liberty of begging you to use your influence with

the Prince of Orange, that it may please his Highness to write, in conformity with my request to the States of Holland, to the president and councillors of the Court of Justice.'

Unable to believe that the Prince of Orange once in power would profit by it to satisfy his political dislikes, John de Witt hoped that the new Stadtholder would hasten to do him justice. He reckoned equally on his justice and his gratitude. But the solicitude he had testified for him when presiding over his education and giving him his first lessons in politics had only been repaid with unthankfulness. It was in vain that, since the appointment of the Prince of Orange as Captain-General, the Grand Pensionary had given him every assistance, as is shown in his correspondence, notably when he writes to him in these terms: 'I beg your Highness to let me know how matters stand with you, and what I can do here to provide the best means of assistance for your Highness and the States army, using all my energy and powers to succeed.' Vainly had he believed in the sincerity of the Prince of Orange's thanks when the latter replied to him the next day, begging him 'to hold out a helping hand to oblige one who was, and would always remain, his affectionate friend.' Deaf to the despairing voice of the great minister, whom he could not forgive for having so long withheld from him the inheritance of his ancestors, William III. kept him waiting ten days for his answer, the premeditated delay of which is mentioned by the envoy of the Elector of Brandenburg. He reckoned on thus forcing him to make the act of submission to which he wished to bring him. Van Beuningen, who was not indifferent to the misfortunes of his former friend, in spite of the change of opinions which had chilled their relations, had undertaken, according to a contemporary author, to arrange an agreement between the Grand Pensionary and the new Stadtholder. He represented to the Prince the great assistance which so able a minister could give him, by his experience in public affairs, in the midst of the dangers to which the republic was exposed. But De Witt did not think himself justified in making any agreement which would render him unfaithful to the cause he had always served. He quietly

but firmly evaded the advances made to him, though protesting against any suspicion either of hostility towards the Prince of Orange or of animosity to his person. William III. was, moreover, deterred from any fresh proceedings by his more intimate councillors, especially Fagel, who was anxious to succeed in sole charge to the office of Grand Pensionary, the vacancy of which he was expecting.

This attempt at an agreement was carried no further. Van Beuningen, whose intervention had become useless, was sent back to Brussels to carry on the diplomatic mission which he was conducting with the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands; and the Prince of Orange no longer hesitated to let the Grand Pensionary know that he refused him all protection. The tardy answer sent to him was cleverly calculated to prevent De Witt making use of it in his defence. 'Sir,' he writes to him, 'I have received your letter of the 12th inst. with the pasquinade which accompanied it. I should not have failed to answer it sooner had not the multiplicity of my occupations prevented it. I can assure you that I have always despised reports which are started in this manner, since not only my family, but I myself, have been several times attacked with a freedom and avidity beyond all bounds. As to the two points of which you made mention in yours, namely your handling of the secret service money and the little care you are reported to have taken in providing the army with all requirements, I can only say that as to the first I have no knowledge of it, and that the deputies of the States, as you very properly observe in yours, can better testify to this than anyone else. As to the second, I do not and cannot doubt that you took such care of the armies of the States both by land and sea as the conditions of affairs and of the times would allow, and in such a manner that they would have been capable of resisting the enemy. But you must be aware yourself that it would be impossible to specify all that may have been wanting, particularly to the land forces, and to verify either the trouble taken to supply deficiencies which were afterwards discovered, or that which might and ought to have been taken at the time, or to determine who was in fault, for

I am so taken up with business in these unhappy and troublesome times, that I have involved myself as little as possible in looking into the past. You will, therefore, find a much better justification in your past acts of prudence than in anything you can obtain from me. I trust with all my heart to have some other opportunity of proving myself your affectionate friend, William Henry, Prince of Orange.' With his habitual dissimulation William avoided any direct reproach to the Grand Pensionary, but he was careful at the same time not to exonerate him, and by leaving him open to suspicion, instead of coming to his assistance, he delivered him up without defence to his enemies.

Another victim was to be offered up to them as a sacrifice, Cornelius de Witt, against whom equally implacable resentment had been aroused. Since his return from the fleet he had lived in his house at Dordrecht, confined to his room and often to his bed by the rheumatism which he had suffered from since the naval campaign in which he had just taken so glorious a part. He had returned to find, surrounded by her five children, the brave companion of his life, Maria van Berckel, whose affectionate care was equal to her invincible strength of mind. The close and almost daily correspondence which he kept up with her shows the pains she took in the purchase of his outfit, for which his brother offers her an advance in the payment of the rents due to him and in the preparation of such medicaments as he might require. 'I found amongst my things,' he writes to her, 'a supply of balsam, and my servant tells me you have assured him that this remedy is very useful for stanching blood, but I do not know how to use it.' He was wrong to doubt her wifely forethought. In fact, a postscript mentions that the directions for the use of the medicament had not been forgotten, and he adds, 'Let us hope we shall not need it, nevertheless I thank you for your precautions.'

The thought of great duties to be fulfilled towards his country is the prevailing tone of all these letters, and softens the pain of separation. Knowing how thoroughly his wife shared in his brave confidence in the ardently desired victory, he had no fear of her ever giving way. He is certain of a

cordial reception of his suggestion when he recommends her to pray, confiding herself to God's mercy. For three weeks he kept her constantly informed of the manœuvres of the fleet, which were intended to hasten the encounter the enemy was trying to avoid. 'God be praised!' he writes to her, in a few lines from on board 'The Seven Provinces' man-of-war, after the fight in which he had faced death, 'I have come safe and sound out of yesterday's terrible battle, which lasted the whole day.' The next day he gives her a short account, with a list of the losses sustained by the English fleet; and setting himself aside as if he had been but a witness of the victory, he merely writes that 'the result has been most advantageous to the republic.' Maria van Berkel was in her turn to show herself worthy of her husband, doing honour to the lessons in heroism which she had received, during the cruel trials she had to go through.

Cornelius de Witt, like his brother, had everything to fear from the political reaction to which the change of government had just given rise. The Orange party could not forgive him for having resisted to the utmost the attempt made to force him to sign the act revoking the Perpetual Edict. The proofs he had just given in the States' fleet, of courage and devotion, could not save him from odious suspicions. Hatred and calumny had caused his services to be disregarded and had given rise to imaginary grievances against him. They even went so far as to accuse him of having hindered an attack on the French squadron, whilst continuing the fight against the English fleet. It mattered little that during the whole time that the battle of Solebay lasted, he remained intrepidly exposed to the enemy's fire on the deck of the flag-ship: he was accused of having hidden himself in the hold. He was, moreover, said to have misappropriated the naval stores, because, with Ruyter's authority, he had brought back from the fleet 3,000 lbs. of powder, refusing to allow it to be employed in the salutes which as a plenipotentiary of the States he ought to have received when he left the flag-ship, preferring to place this ammunition at the disposal of the magistrates of Dordrecht, that it might be used in the defence of the town.

His fellow-citizens, misled by the falsehoods which distorted all his actions, manifested hostility towards him from which he had much to fear. A fresh rising having taken place amongst the people of Dordrecht, who demanded a change of magistrates, his portrait, which had been preserved in the Town Hall as a trophy of victory, and which represented him leaning against a cannon during the glorious expedition to Chatham, was cut in pieces, the head being detached to be hung on a gibbet; and these acts of violence were accompanied by the most murderous suggestions. At the same time the peasants of Goeree, falsely persuaded that he had taken refuge in their island with a view to seeking refuge with the fleet and placing his life in safety, searched the country through to discover his retreat. They announced their intention of killing him; and his former clerk, on whom they laid hands, with difficulty escaped from their fury. A few days later, the arrest of Cornelius de Witt completed the work of vengeance which was being so relentlessly pursued against the two brothers, and it was the representatives of justice who placed themselves at the service of triumphant iniquity. On the afternoon of Sunday, July 24, whilst the municipal magistrates and most of the inhabitants of Dordrecht were at church, John Ruysch, the Procurator-Fiscal of the Court of Holland, went to Cornelius de Witt's house, accompanied by his archers. He came to arrest or rather to kidnap him. The burghers of Dordrecht, according to the municipal freedom which had been granted to them, were only amenable to the Town Council; nothing short of a surprise would therefore have sufficed to take away from the jurisdiction of his natural judges one of their magistrates, a former burgomaster of their town, and who had been deputed by the States of Holland to administer the district of Putten, in the neighbourhood of Dordrecht, with the title of ruard, or governor. Cornelius de Witt made no protest, and gave himself up to his persecutors. He sent to fetch his wife from church, where she had gone with her two sons, calmed their anxiety, and after having embraced his children, got into his carriage with the Procurator-Fiscal. A yacht was waiting in the river and

took him to the Hague. The next day, on his arrival, he asked in vain for a carriage to take him to the prison of the Court of Holland, La Castelnie, where he was to be closely guarded. He was obliged to go on foot, and the brother of the First Minister of the province, the former plenipotentiary of the States-General, who three months before had quitted the Hague escorted by a guard of honour, was brought back like a malefactor, escorted by the officers of justice, to the joy of the mob, always eager for the sight of great calamities.

As soon as he had been examined by the commissioners of the Court, he hastened to communicate with his wife, though he could give her little information. 'Dearest,' he writes to her, 'I arrived here yesterday morning at about seven o'clock with the persons who arrested me at Dordrecht. In the afternoon the judges examined me, but I am forbidden to tell you the cause of my arrest or any particulars concerning it. I think I may at least inform you that I told them that I had no doubt they would recognise my innocence, so you may make yourself easy and trust in Almighty God, Who, having protected me so long, will not forsake me in this just cause.' His wife had not waited for the receipt of his letter to write to him, and the day after he left Dordrecht she sent him the following lines, which softened the first hours of his captivity: 'Dearest, I hope you will have arrived tolerably comfortably, and that you will find matters in such a condition that you may soon return, and that Almighty God will have you in His keeping, your cause being just. I hope to receive a letter from you. Your very affectionate wife.'

His arrest, of which the reason remained unknown, led to the supposition that 'some very bad business was in question,' and gave credit to a rumour of a plot in which John de Witt was said to be implicated. 'It is said,' wrote some one, 'that the Ruard has been concerned in some treason against the Prince of Orange, whom his brother the Grand Pensionary wished to poison. Most important and secret documents, which the said Pensionary had already had conveyed out of his house, are being collected and seized. As to himself, he is being guarded in his house, and it is believed that to-night he

will, like the Ruard, be conveyed to a more secure place.' Indifferent to these reports, and preoccupied above all things as to the nature of the accusation brought against his brother, John de Witt spared no trouble to find it out. As soon as he discovered it, he hastened to give the information to the illustrious prisoner's wife, 'praying God to console and support her in this time of terror.' Upon the information of a barber surgeon, belonging to the village of Piershil, named Tichelaer, he was accused of an attempt to assassinate the Prince of Orange. Tichelaer had presented himself about a fortnight before, on Friday, July 8, at Cornelius de Witt's house. Being upon his request admitted into the Ruard's room, who was in bed, he told him he had come to him in his capacity of chief judge of the district of Putten, for compensation for an unjust charge of which he declared himself the victim, in a lawsuit brought against him by his maid-servant. Cornelius de Witt had promised his interest, adding that he would refuse him nothing if Tichelaer would consent to lend himself to an undertaking the secret of which he was disposed to confide to him. Receiving a favourable answer, he renewed the conversation in these terms: 'You must have heard that the Prince has been made Stadtholder, that the people forced me to consent, and that there will be no peace until they have made him sovereign, which would be the ruin of the State, as no doubt the Prince, marrying the daughter of some foreign sovereign, would get the republic entirely into his own hands.'

Tichelaer having then asked him what he wanted of him, he answered that if he thought him capable of mentioning this to any living soul he would have him killed immediately. Having then made up his mind to propose to him to commit the crime, he asked him to go to the Prince of Orange's camp, to assassinate the Stadtholder. After having arranged with him as to the safest means of putting this plan into execution, he had promised him the sum of 13,000 florins, and the office of bailiff of the district of Boyerlandt. Tichelaer could not persuade him to give any security in writing, but Cornelius de Witt with his hand upraised had sworn a solemn oath to pay him the recompense of the crime, and having only six

ducats about him, gave them to him as an earnest of his promise. In order to overcome his agitation he encouraged him, saying, 'You must succeed or perish; the State will never be properly governed during the Prince's life, he must therefore be put out of the world at whatever price.' He added the following words, on which he reckoned to give complete confidence to his accomplice. 'I know,' he said to him, 'of over thirty of the principal magistrates of the States who would willingly employ some one to take the Prince's life, but I have chosen you before all others because I believe you to be a man of resolution.'

A week after this interview, Tichelaer gave tardy information of it. Resolved, he said, to relieve himself of his burden of remorse, and to break the silence which he had sworn to Cornelius de Witt, he went to the Stadtholder's head-quarters. D'Albrantswært, the Prince of Orange's Master of the Household, and his uncle De Zuylesteyn received his first communications, and had desired him to go to the Prince, who had left for the Hague. He started at once, but could not find him. He was accompanied by D'Albrantswært, who took him to the judges. The latter had appointed two of their number, Nierop and Gool, to receive his deposition. It was upon their report that a warrant was secretly transmitted to the Procurator-Fiscal to bring Cornelius de Witt before the Court.

The infamy of the accuser, as well as the well-known integrity of the accused, should have sufficed to cause the denunciation to be looked upon as an impudent calumny. Three years previously, Tichelaer had been prosecuted in the Ruard's name, in his capacity as criminal judge, for an attempted rape upon a young girl name Jeanne Eeuwouts, whom he had endeavoured to seduce. The following year, before the Court of the district of Putten, he was convicted of perjury in an action brought by his maid-servant, Cornelia Pleunen, whose wages he refused to pay on account of some pretended accounts for medical attendance which he claimed from her and which the Court had refused to admit. Having been condemned in costs he grossly insulted his judges, who ordered him to pay a heavy fine, besides making him beg

pardon on his knees. He appealed in vain to Cornelius de Witt as chief judge of the district, and judgment having been confirmed, the Court ordered it to be put into execution.

In accusing Cornelius de Witt of a capital crime, Tichelaer appeared to have no other motive than that of revenge, and, if on that account alone, his depositions showed a onesidedness which was enough to make them suspected, even if not altogether rejected. The improbability of his account, in spite of the fresh details which he added, appeared indeed from his own declarations. Why had he waited so long to reveal a proposal which he said 'had horrified him'? Admitting that Cornelius de Witt could have advised such an attempt, would he have confided himself to this stranger as his accomplice? Did not Tichelaer confess that he had himself gone to him without being summoned? And could it be supposed that the Ruard had selected him without any forethought to carry out such a crime? It was with indignant pride that, from the moment of his first examination, Cornelius de Witt protested against such a denunciation, and, when confronted with Tichelaer, vehemently denied his accuser's story. According to him, the latter came with the intention of ruining him by laying a trap into which he vainly attempted to betray him. In fact, having contrived, by dint of urgency and after being sent away, once to obtain admittance to him at about eleven o'clock in the morning, and expressing a wish to see him in private, he had by this request as well as by his evil countenance aroused the suspicions of the Ruard's wife. The latter, who was on her guard since the recent attempt upon her husband, had placed her eldest son, Jacob, and his valet, Henry Smits, on guard at the door of his room.

Tichelaer, after beginning to talk in a roundabout manner, had offered to give Cornelius de Witt some information in regard to the unfortunate events of the time, which he could make known to him only. The Ruard, naturally distrusting him, answered, 'If it is anything good you have to tell me, I am ready to listen to you and to help you as far as in me lies; but if it is anything evil, keep silence, as I should certainly make it known to the magistrates or to the judges.' Tichelaer rose

and hastily retired, saying, 'Since you will not listen to me, I shall keep my secret.' The visit did not last more than a quarter of an hour. These precise details were confirmed by the depositions of the Ruard's servant, who had accompanied his master to the Hague, and by the evidence of the maids in the house. They are completed in a letter written to Joanna de Zwynrecht by her daughter, who was married to Pompey Van Meerdervoort. 'Tichelaer,' she writes to her, 'lamented much to my uncle over the misfortunes of the times, and said that nothing would go well until his Highness was married, provided only he did not marry a foreigner. He began by saying that he knew one method of quickly pacifying the country, but my uncle De Witt would not listen to him any further, saying, "Go, I will have nothing to do with such rascality, it is no concern of mine. If his Highness marries, I have nothing to do with the matter. Leave the house, and do not speak to me of such villany, as for my part I should certainly make it known."'

Cornelius de Witt was not contented with merely sending away one whom he considered as an emissary bribed by his enemies. As soon as he had given an account of his interview to his wife, his sufferings preventing his writing, he desired her to write a letter in his name to the town secretary, Arendt Muys van Holy, to beg him to come to him immediately. Desirous of neglecting no precaution, he told him of the visit he had received, and asked him to let the burgomaster of the town know of it. He also gave notice to his nephew, Pompey van Meerdervoort, and to the town-sheriff, Gerard van der Dussen, so that failing the town-bailiff, who was ill, they might tell his substitute, Adrien Brillant. After having carefully collected all this information, John de Witt thought himself authorised to write 'that there was nothing to cause any alarm in the matter, unless from the malice of men.'

Strong in the integrity of his own conscience, Cornelius refused to challenge his judges, and made no use of the deed which his brother sent him the day after his arrest, to enable him to invoke the jurisdiction of his native town. The

deputies of Dordrecht, however, protested against this violation of their municipal privileges, and it was no doubt at the request of their pensionary Vivien, cousin of the two brothers, that they took the part of their illustrious fellow-citizen. They were anxious to clear him from a defamatory libel which accused him of misappropriating the powder belonging to the fleet, and not content with bearing witness to his patriotism they pointed out to the States of Holland the injustice of his arrest. They impugned both the competency and the procedure of the Court, demanding that their former burgomaster should be arraigned before the tribunal of his own town, or at any rate that they should shut up Tichelaer, who had remained at liberty under the pretence of finding witnesses.

The States took this proposal into consideration, but with cowardly weakness dared not ask for the release of the accused. They confined themselves to appointing a committee charged with making an immediate report to them on the conflict of jurisdiction complained of by the deputies of Dordrecht. Nevertheless, on a motion of the deputies of Hoorn and Enckhuyzen, in spite of the ill-will shown by the deputies of Haarlem, they required an explanation from the judges as to the consideration hitherto shown to the accuser contrary to the judicial customs of the times. They had already received a petition, presented by Jacob de Witt, the aged father of the accused, who demanded the imprisonment of Tichelaer to prevent his suborning witnesses against his son.

It was necessary that the judges should take a decided line with regard to the accused. Not daring to decide for themselves, they consulted the Prince of Orange. They wished that William should either allow them to do justice in the case by openly reproving the accuser, or, if he intended to dispose of the prisoner according to his own ideas, that he should appoint commissioners to take it out of their hands. But the Stadtholder, who was not disposed to be magnanimous, was at the same time too cunning to commit the slightest imprudence. Faithful to his policy of non-intervention, the Prince of Orange repeated the words which had been attributed to John de Witt, when he was asked to intercede for

his assassin, Jacob van der Graef, and declared 'that justice must run its course.' The comparison was as unjust as it was cruel and insulting; the observation was received as an order, and the Court declared itself competent and summoned Cornelius de Witt to submit himself. They, however, thought it necessary to arrest Tichelaer, and had him shut up in the House of Detention, called the 'Prison Gate' (*Gevangepoort*), but, on the other hand, maintained that instead of leaving the Ruard at the 'Conciergerie,' they ought to condemn him to the same captivity as his accuser. Cornelius de Witt was, therefore, transferred to one of the cells of this gloomy building—blackened with age, and pierced with narrow windows furnished with bars of iron—which still remains intact. He was there to experience the cruelty of his judges before he perished beneath the blows of popular frenzy. It was in vain that his family repeatedly attempted measures in his favour. John de Witt was much troubled as to the fate of a brother he dearly loved, and whom he considered as the victim of that hatred and animosity which he himself had encountered. He did all in his power to save him. His almost daily correspondence with his sister-in-law shows the pains he took in the defence of the accused. He earnestly entreats Maria van Berkel to send him all the depositions of the new witnesses, completing the attestations already received, and also the statement of Tichelaer's judicial antecedents, which he reckoned upon using to convict him before the Court as a rogue. 'I hope and believe,' he writes to her, 'that I shall soon see the falseness of the accusation made clear, so that your husband may be restored to liberty and honour, for which I pray the Almighty, to Whose protection I commend you.' Having thus collected all the evidence of his brother's defence, he applied to the foremost advocates at the Hague for their advice as to the course to be followed. After some consultation a voluminous judicial memorial was drawn up and sent by the wife and friends of the accused to the Court of Justice, in which, according to a contemporaneous work, no less than four hundred and four articles were set forth in his justification.

John de Witt busied himself also in exonerating his brother from other offences wickedly imputed to him. With this idea he wrote to Ruyter, knowing the weight of his testimony, and how confidently he could ask for it. In announcing Cornelius de Witt's arrest to the admiral, he told him of the calumnies which had not been spared to his brother even for his conduct while with the fleet, and against which Ruyter could, better than anyone else, defend him who had been, during the late naval campaign, his faithful companion in danger and in glory. With this view he sent him a draft of a letter of justification, and not wishing to seem to be asking him a favour, only requested him 'to make any alterations he thought proper, if he found the slightest thing in the declaration which was not strictly true. Ruyter, who was as high-minded as he was courageous, was not disposed to abandon in misfortune those whose friendship he had sought in happier times. He therefore hastened to reply to the Grand Pensionary's request by sending a message to the States of Holland, in which he rendered signal justice 'to the intrepidity of Cornelius de Witt, to the services which he owed to him, and to the truly brotherly union in which he had lived with him.' At the same time he sent a private letter to John de Witt, sympathising with him in his trials. 'If your brother,' he writes to him, 'is as innocent of all the rest that is imputed to him as he is in all that passed with the fleet, he has been terribly maligned.'

The hope of exonerating the accused became, however, daily weaker. Rightly believing that his brother was the victim of political revenge, John de Witt appealed to the only person who could shield him, and went publicly to visit the Prince of Orange. Forced to wait till his wounds were cured, the worst of which was not yet completely healed over, he had taken advantage of his first going out, on Sunday, July 31, to go to church and offer thanks to God for his recovery. The next day he hastened to see William, who had just arrived at the Hague. There is no evidence of this interview in any document of the time excepting the following letter to Bernard: 'Last Monday the Grand Pensionary made his bow to the

Prince of Orange, to whom he affirmed that he had never done anything either against his conscience or against his honour, but that seeing the people were not satisfied with his conduct he begged his Highness to allow him to resign his office. Upon which the Prince replied very shortly that it was for him to do as he thought best, and that, as to his resignation, he would do well to ask the States of Holland, his employers, the Prince himself having no difficulty in granting it to him.'

Rebuffed by this coldness, which left room for no doubts, and being invited to retire rather than in any degree detained, John de Witt saw that there was only one thing to be done: to send in his resignation, which for a month past he had been keeping in abeyance. Powerless to protect his brother against an unjust prosecution, he hoped to save him by disarming the resentment of the Stadtholder and renouncing his office, and hesitated no longer about giving it up. Moreover it did not cost him much. 'He saw,' writes Wicquefort, 'his plans undermined, the principles of his conduct destroyed, and so extraordinary a change of scene, that he now only played the ridiculous part of dummy where he had once been the principal performer.' He preferred yielding to necessity with a good grace, and not seeking in a useless prolongation of his tenure of office to survive the government of which he had been the head.

Still bearing visible traces of the sufferings his wounds had caused him, he only re-entered the Assembly of the States, after an absence of five weeks, to give in his formal resignation. Having informed his friends of his irrevocable determination, he took for the last time the chair from which he had so often risen to help by his words the interests of the republic. He made known his resolution in a remarkable speech afterwards published in a pamphlet, and which was an eloquent vindication of his long ministry.

'Noble and Great Lords,' he said, 'it was nineteen years ago, on the 30th of July last, that for the first time I took the oath in your Assembly in the capacity of Grand Pensionary of the Province of Holland. During these nineteen years the State

has been exposed to great wars and other calamities which, by the help of God and the wisdom of your Noble and Great Mightinesses, as well as by your courage and behaviour, were mostly happily terminated, and at last ceased. Your Noble and Great Mightinesses know with what zeal, with what pains and study, I have applied myself for several years to avoid the occasions for dissatisfaction and rupture in which we are now involved with the formidable enemy of this State. You cannot forget, my lords, how often I have taken the liberty of representing to you the misfortunes which might arise in the future if serious measures were not taken to apply betimes the necessary remedies to the evil with which we were threatened. But God, to Whose providence we must always respectfully submit, however incomprehensible it may appear, has chosen that matters should grow worse, and that we should become involved in this mischievous, ruinous, and fatal war, although the States in general, and the province of Holland in particular, have had ample time to prepare themselves and to provide all that was necessary for a vigorous defence.

'The registers of this Assembly and the recollections of its members give ample testimony to the constancy and urgency with which I have exhorted your Noble and Great Mightinesses, as well as those other provinces which are friendly and allied to us, to place themselves on their guard. Justice must be done. You have taken all imaginable care to avert the evil which was feared. You have done it also with all the promptitude and diligence possible in a body composed of so many members, and so constituted that it is usually more affected by the sight of sudden and pressing need than by exhortations founded on dangers which are only foreseen. In spite of all your care and attention in averting this evil, it has pleased God in His anger to bring down upon the States those misfortunes in which they are now involved, and that in a manner so difficult to understand—seeing the rapidity of the enemy's conquests and the faint resistance of those in command of our fortified towns—that posterity will find it hard to believe. What is most distressing at this unhappy conjuncture is, that these sudden disasters and misfortunes have produced in the

minds of the people and the inhabitants of this State not only a sentiment of general fear and dread, but a sinister feeling against their magistrates, especially against those who have had more to do than others with the management of affairs. Unjust, however, as these suspicions are, I at any rate am overwhelmed by them, though I cannot but think I might have been spared, since as a humble servant of the State I have only been able to obey implicitly the commands of my masters. But whether it is that I am thought not to have properly carried out the functions of my office, or that ignorant people imagine that I have appropriated what never passed through my hands, I am so furiously inveighed against, that I can in conscience come to no other conclusion than that my services must henceforth be prejudicial to the State, since it is very certain that it would suffice for me to have been employed in putting into writing the resolutions of your Noble and Great Mightinesses for these to be unacceptable to the people, who for that reason would not act upon them with the promptitude necessary for the use and benefit of the country. I have, therefore, thought it would be best to beg your Noble and Great Mightinesses, as I very humbly do, that it may please your goodness to relieve me of the exercise of the said office.'

Mindful, in his brother's interests still more than his own, of the situation in which he would be placed in returning to private life, he wound up by reminding the States that they had reserved to him, by a promise three times renewed, the office of judge in either of the two courts in which he might choose to sit, when he ceased to be their minister, and he claimed his right of admission into the High Court. The States of Holland, after having listened to his account and to the conclusions which he drew, gave him permission to withdraw whilst they deliberated on his request to be relieved of his office. The greater number of the members of the Assembly stated that they would have wished that the Grand Pensionary should continue to render good and faithful service, declaring 'that they only consented to part with him on account of the necessity of the times.' But the deputies of Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leyden, Gornichen, and Enckhuizen, who wished to

ingratiate themselves with the Prince of Orange, contented themselves with a curt acceptance of John de Witt's resignation. The Assembly was, however, unanimous in recognising the engagements it had made, by granting him his appointment in the High Court, and the majority were disposed to make the same formal acknowledgment of their gratitude as when four or five years previously at the zenith of his power his tenure of office had been renewed. As an additional proof of confidence they requested him to prepare a report on the state of the finances, which would enable the States to ascertain what resources were at their disposal. It was a last appeal to his experience in public affairs, and to his solicitude for the welfare of the country.

By the next day reflection had rendered most of the members more cautious, and the deputies of Haarlem even went so far as to take part openly against the Grand Pensionary. 'The town of Haarlem is not at all favourable to his resignation,' says a letter to Bernard, 'for the reason that if the States allow him to retire without any further investigation, they will be obliged to thank him for his service and good administration during the time he was in office, whereas it is of opinion that there should be some previous inquiry into many things that have taken place since he was made Pensionary. He is accused, in fact, of not having provided all that was necessary for the Prince of Orange's army, besides having misappropriated the secret service money.' Without taking note of a hostility so unjustifiable the States dared not set aside the opinion of the Prince of Orange, and Beverningh was commissioned to submit the resolution to him before it was definitively concluded.

The same day the Prince of Orange let them know that he thought it required much consideration, and that he desired to reflect upon it. The following day he declared with more or less good grace that he would not oppose it, but requested that the congratulations addressed to the Grand Pensionary in 1668 might not be renewed. The Assembly submitted humbly to his opinion, and confined themselves to the ordinary form of thanks. As to the States of Zealand, they

did not spare John de Witt a final outrage. The High Court being common to both provinces, they endeavoured to prevent his taking his seat, although according to the routine for judicial appointments the States of Holland alone had a right to dispose of it. They thus kept in abeyance to the very eve of his death his investiture in the office to which he was entitled by his retirement, and which would have been his one waif saved from the wreck.

The calmness of the Grand Pensionary's mind was little disturbed by these last strokes of adversity and injustice. He had too much dignity to complain of the Prince of Orange's ill-feeling towards him in dissuading the States from recording in their resolutions any public testimony of their gratitude. He avoided, even in his most intimate correspondence, any allusion to the ill-will from which he had suffered. 'Sir,' he writes in August to his brother-in-law—'on Thursday, the 4th of this month, I respectfully begged the States of Holland to release me from my office of Grand Pensionary and to allow me to sit as judge in the High Court. These two points were unanimously ceded to me by their Noble Mightinesses with a very courteous acknowledgment and the thanks of the whole Assembly. But as I learnt afterwards that it would be agreeable to the Prince of Orange to be consulted on the subject, especially in regard to the place of judge in the High Court, to which appointment he lays claim as Stadtholder of the Province, I asked M. the Pensionary Vivien to see that before the deliberation was renewed his Highness's opinion had been asked. After having taken a little time for reflection he stated yesterday that having heard and considered my request he agreed to it, and no further remarks having been made on the subject the said resolution was, upon the second reading, definitively concluded.' John de Witt expressed himself more openly in the letter, eloquent in its simplicity, which he wrote to Ruyter. It was free from bitterness, but he could not repress an accent of touching sadness. 'The people of Holland,' he wrote to him, 'have not only laid to my charge all the disasters which have befallen the republic, they have not even been satisfied to see me fall unarmed and defenceless

into the hands of four assassins; but when by the goodness of Divine Providence I escaped with my life and had recovered from my wounds, they were seized with a mortal hatred against those of their magistrates who they thought had had the greatest part in the direction of affairs, and especially against me, although I have been but a servant of the State. It was this which forced me to resign my office as Pensionary.'

Along, however, with these melancholy reflections on the ingratitude of his fellow-citizens, he could not help looking forward with pleasure to his well-earned repose. 'I find myself relieved of a very heavy and embarrassing charge, especially in these unfortunate times,' he wrote to one of his brothers-in-law in the letter informing them of his resignation, 'and I have reason to be most thankful to Almighty God.' He remembered how dear power had cost his predecessors: Olden Barneveldt had lost his head on the scaffold, a victim to the resistance he had made to the domination of the Stadtholder Maurice of Orange; Pauw only escaped by his retirement from the unjust accusations against which he could not have protected himself; Cats, overwhelmed by the weight of anxieties and difficulties in which he found himself involved, had fallen on his knees before the assembled States to thank God for relieving him of so heavy a burden. These examples recalled to De Witt the melancholy prediction which had been made when, at the time of his first appointment, one of his father's friends had advised him 'not to accept the office of Grand Pensionary unless he was indifferent as to whether he were put into his coffin whole or in pieces.' Once free of his office, he might hope that his resignation would serve to avert the implacable rigour of that fate which he was, nevertheless, not to escape. In giving up the power which, moreover, he only held in appearance, since the restoration of the Stadtholdership had placed the government in the hands of the Prince of Orange, De Witt had at any rate distinguished himself up to the last moment by his services to his country. He had placed the last obstacles in the way of further conquests, by the measures for defence which had arrested the enemy on the threshold of Holland. If his premature

retirement left him to regret not having accomplished the work of deliverance, he had at least the consolation of having done everything in his power to pave the way for success.

The question now was, how to replace him. Five days after his resignation the day was settled for the election of his successor, and the States of Holland determined to prepare instructions for a new Grand Pensionary, which before being adopted were submitted for the approval of the Prince of Orange. Several deputies advised that the functions of this office should be divided, one minister seeming now insufficient. They wished to give the administration of the finances to a Treasurer-General, to reserve the foreign correspondence for a Secretary of State, and leave to the Grand Pensionary the direction of the affairs of the Province. This proposal was not accepted, and John de Witt's office remained intact with the exception of the post of Keeper of the Seals and the administration of the fiefs of the Province, which were dissevered from it to be given to one of the deputies of the nobles, Duvenwoorde.

After having agreed upon the instructions for the new Pensionary of Holland, the States decided to reserve to themselves the nomination of three candidates, between whom the Prince of Orange would have to choose. This decision resulted in a ballot, and in spite of the provisions of the French agent Bernard in favour of Hop, the Pensionary of Amsterdam, the votes were divided between Fagel, the Secretary of the States-General; Beverningh, deputy of Gouda; Van Beuningen, Pensionary of Leyden; and Rudolph van Niedeck, former Pensionary of Rotterdam, and a judge of the High Court. Fagel obtained the majority of votes, twelve were given to Beverningh, and six to Van Niedeck. According to the terms of the resolution of the States, the Prince of Orange had to decide between the first three. He was not tempted to give the preference to Beverningh or to Van Beuningen, whose former friendship for John de Witt made him doubtful of them. He had, therefore, no hesitation in choosing Fagel, whom the States had placed first on their list, and whom he considered in a measure to be his own representative. The States of Holland definitively confirmed the Stadtholder's

choice, and Fagel entered upon his office on the day following that on which the great minister whom he succeeded was to pay with his life for the services rendered to his country.

John de Witt had now no refuge but death from the hatred of his enemies, and it was his brother who led him into the catastrophe to which both succumbed. Having been unable to obtain justice, Cornelius still awaited in prison the good pleasure of those upon whom his fate depended. Through the barred windows of his cell, he could see the neighbouring house of his brother on the Kneuterdijk, where his old father lived and in which he had shared the family greatness, now changed to cruel misfortunes. His thoughts must equally have turned to his peaceful home at Dordrecht, where he had left his wife surrounded by her sons and young daughters. According to a tradition which still remains, but which has no authority beyond that of a legend, two drawings by Cornelius de Witt's own hand on the panels of one of the rooms on the upper floor of the prison, where they may yet be seen, represent his house at Dordrecht and that of his brother—sweet though sad reminiscences of better times.

His imprisonment had in no way affected his tranquillity or calmness of mind. He had taken with him two volumes which have been preserved as precious relics of his last studies. One is in London, at the South Kensington Museum, an Elzevir edition of Horace, in which is to be found beneath his name and the date of August 20, 1672, an inscription in red ink, showing that he had had the book in his hand on the day of his death. The other was a volume of French plays, printed at Paris in 1671, and which included the following: 'La Femme Juge,' 'L'Imposteur, ou le Tartufe,' 'L'Avare,' and 'M. de Pourceaugnac,' by Molière; 'Les Intrigues amoureuses,' by Gilbert; and Racine's 'Britannicus.' This book, now in a private collection at Deventer, is thus inscribed: 'The Lord Beveren van Zwyndrecht, brother-in-law to Cornelius de Witt, having made him a present of this book, it was found after his murder in the room where he had been kept prisoner in the year 1672.'

The prisoner, avoiding all complaints, continued to write to

his wife about his pecuniary affairs, especially desiring her to sell his latest crops, and testifying at the same time his great desire for news of herself as well as of the children's health. 'Dearest,' he begins his letter to her, 'although I have no doubt that the judges are perfectly satisfied of my innocence, I am, nevertheless, detained here to wait with resignation until they are pleased to wind up my affair. Pray be calm and wait with confidence for a happy ending. I remain, my dearly beloved, your humble servant and affectionate husband.' He ends his letters with these words, so expressive in their laconicism, 'in prison.'

After having alternately tried, first to prepare the most complete method of defence for him and then to obtain for him the protection of the Prince of Orange, not only by his appeals but by his resignation of the office of Grand Pensionary, John de Witt was forced to recognise the uselessness of his efforts. But he still continued to show an apparent confidence to his sister-in-law: 'Although in these intrigues we experience more and more the effects of the calamities of the times,' he writes, 'we think we have no reason to fear that innocence will be oppressed and overwhelmed, but rather to hope that by God's grace we may attain to a happy issue.' 'May the Almighty God,' he adds in the last letter of this private correspondence, which has been preserved, 'give, to all that we may do in favour of my dear brother, a speedy termination in conformity with justice, that the honour of the family may be re-established. I therefore pray for his protection and consolation on your behalf.'

All these attempts in favour of the prisoner seemed to be checked by a determination to find him guilty. Cornelius de Witt began to be uneasy and to suspect the partiality of his judges, whom hitherto he had not mistrusted. With this idea he questioned the gaoler to know whether, having been a member of all the boards in the province, he could not appeal to his brother to obtain for him a hearing in the Assembly of the deputies of Holland. Being asked to give his reason for this request of an appeal to the jurisdiction of the States of his province, he said that he had acted with the idea of doing honour

to himself, adding that if he did not at once acknowledge the competency of the Court of Justice, it was to avoid authorising precedents which might affect the privileges of the town magistrates. This tardy demand did not prevent the examination from taking its course, although there could not be found in support of the prosecution 'either presumption, indication, or proofs,' as John de Witt writes to his sister-in-law. Had the judges only been independent, Cornelius de Witt must have been set at liberty immediately. But the fear of braving the popular hatred, or of displeasing the Prince of Orange, prepared them all to follow other inspirations than those of their own consciences. They had been reduced from nine to six members. Two of them, Fannins and Halewyn, were absent on the service of the State, Fannins being detained in North Holland, as commissioner of the Synod; and he would moreover, no doubt, have been obliged to excuse himself, being a cousin of Cornelius de Witt through his wife, Catherine van Sypesteyn. Halewyn, who from his character and influence over his colleagues might have forced them to do justice to the accused, had not returned from England, where he had been sent on an embassy. The third absentee was Graef, father of John de Witt's assassin. He had never returned to the Hague since his son had been condemned and executed. As to those judges who remained, Albert Nierop and Gool had shown their animosity against the Ruard from the very commencement of the examination, in the first interrogatories with which they had been charged. Goes' integrity was not to be depended on, and Van Lier and Cornelius Baan were impenetrable.

The president, Pauw, Lord of Bennebroeck, son of the former Grand Pensionary of the province, whose uncle Pauw, Lord of Ter Horst, presided for several years in the Grand Council, could alone be considered as favourable to the accused. He did not forget that he owed his position to John de Witt, who, to please the nobles of the province, had given him the preference over Paets, one of the principal members of the magistracy of Amsterdam, whose religious orthodoxy seemed doubtful. But his ignorance of the law, which deprived his opinion of all weight, prevented his directing

the debate, and his only anxiety was not to compromise himself. It was the same with the Procurator-Fiscal John Ruysch, nephew of the Pensionary of Delft, Van der Dussen, and cousin of the former Secretary of the States-General, Nicholas Ruysch, who had been one of the Grand Pensionary's most intimate friends; but his good-will was of no use to Cornelius de Witt, as from his incapacity and weakness of character he was not equal to the fulfilment of his functions. 'There is a proverb,' writes a contemporary, 'which says that a prisoner is always guilty, and it was Tacitus who said, "*Florentis domus amici afflictam deserunt.*"'

The councillors intentionally involved themselves in technicalities, and the deposition of Muys, the secretary of Dordrecht, gave them an opportunity of pointing out certain discrepancies in Cornelius de Witt's answers, which they eagerly pitched upon. Surprise and indignation had, no doubt, confused him in his first replies. He had begun by saying that he did not know Tichelaer and had merely related his visit as that of a stranger, whom he described, whilst Muys in his deposition spoke of Tichelaer as if the Ruard had already called his attention to him. Cornelius de Witt's silence, moreover, at his first examination, as to the hostility manifested by Tichelaer towards the Prince of Orange, when he had previously mentioned it in his statement to Muys, told against him. It is true he acknowledged that Tichelaer had begun by speaking of the danger which would ensue to the republic from the Prince of Orange's marriage with the daughter of a foreign prince, offering at the same time to divulge to him a means of pacifying the country. But he added that Tichelaer, whom he had at once silenced, had made no mention of a plot of assassination. The councillors were also desirous to know whether, either of his own accord or at the request of his wife, Cornelius de Witt had commissioned Muys to inform the burgomaster of the visit he had received, and whether also the bailiff's deputy had been informed by the wish of the accused, or whether the secretary had taken this upon himself. They were surprised, in any case, that Cornelius de Witt should have attached any importance to a conversation which,

according to his own account, must have seemed of no moment. Following the suggestions of his enemies, they seemed to impute the Ruard's promptness in denouncing Tichelaer's visit, to a wish to conceal the criminal proposals made to him, without reflecting that he would have been careful not to arouse any suspicions as to the project had he been its instigator and accomplice. Such were the improbabilities and obscurities which the councillors seemed to take delight in, thus enveloping the truth in thick clouds, as if they could not, or dared not, look upon it.

The original documents of the trial seem to show that they yielded to an even less excusable temptation, that of bringing Cornelius de Witt to account as legally answerable for his political opinions, although he was not responsible to the councillors for them. Muys and Hoogewerf, the captain of the burghers of Dordrecht, on being questioned, gave evidence as to the violent scene in which the Ruard, after some useless resistance, had been forced to sign the revocation of the Perpetual Edict. Cornelius de Witt, by his open and unreserved confirmation at three different examinations of the account given by these two witnesses, placed in the hands of his judges a weapon against himself, by reminding them that they had before them one of the most faithful and determined representatives of the republican party. With his usual courageous decision he stated that, after having in his capacity as magistrate of Dordrecht voted for the Perpetual Edict as contributing to the preservation of the liberty of the country, he could not sign the Act which revoked it. He added that having sworn to observe it he could boast that he had not chosen to break his oath until he was relieved of it. He nevertheless protested against the feeling of animosity imputed to him in regard to the Prince of Orange. Not allowing himself to be embarrassed by the captious questions which were put to him, he declared loyally but simply that he had never taken into consideration what might happen in the event of his Highness' death, but that in the present situation of affairs he thought that such a death would place the republic in the greatest confusion. Anxious to gain the good graces of the

new chief of the State, the councillors tried to obtain from the accused an expression of repentance for his conduct, by asking him what had been the result of the Perpetual Edict. He answered that he had nothing to say to them about it, not wishing to give them a reply which might be taken as a disavowal. Such complaints could not without open scandal be brought against the accused, so that, to connect with the accusation statements which seemed absolutely alien to it, the judges had to be equally supple and inventive. They considered themselves at liberty to make use of the evidence either to convict the accused of a desire for vengeance, or to bring up against him fresh discrepancies. They thus managed to attach a criminal meaning to the following words, which Muys and Hoogewerf declared they had heard him utter when he was urged to sign the revocation of the Perpetual Edict: 'Rather run me through with your sword; or if you will not do that, call some of the ruffians and vagabonds from outside, and they will undertake it.' These words were taken up as a provocation addressed to the partisans of the Prince of Orange. Cornelius de Witt's denial, and declaration that he had uttered no words but these, 'I would rather be stabbed in my bed than stoned in the streets by the mob,' was considered as a mere excuse.

The depositions, moreover, which he acknowledged to be correct, and in which Muys and Hoogewerf recalled to mind the force which had been put upon him, were compared with Tichelaer's denunciation. The latter used the same terms in repeating the account which he stated had been given to him by Cornelius de Witt of this scene, whereas the accused asserted that he had never mentioned it to him. Instead of recognising that public report would have sufficed to furnish Tichelaer with the information he had given, the judges preferred to believe that Cornelius alone could have communicated it to him. They were therefore obstinate in their conclusion that his interview with Tichelaer had been of a confidential character and of a nature to give credit to the charges brought against him. It was in vain that Cornelius de Witt, confronted with his accuser, had twice forced him to

retract in answer to questions which had been put to him. A second examination, in which he asked to be again confronted with him, was refused. Tichelaer was thus able to confirm his own declarations and to contradict those of the Ruard at his leisure, without any fear of the latter's forcing him to contradict himself. Hoping to oblige the accused to confess his guilt, the judges did not shrink from putting him to the torture.

The report of their resolution, which has been fortunately preserved in the manuscript reports of the trial, allows of each one receiving his share of honour or ignominy according to his deserts. Albert Nierop, the oldest of the councillors, was the first to propose putting Cornelius de Witt to the torture. William Goes followed him. Frederick van Lier only expressed a wish to hear again those witnesses who had contradicted the accuser on certain points, and promised to agree to the torture if the discrepancies still continued. Matthew Gool had not even such feeble scruples, but voted without hesitation or reservation like the first two. Cornelius Baan alone protested with unshaken firmness against the cruel abuse of which his colleagues wished to make the accused a victim. He warmly urged that Tichelaer could not be considered as a witness, and ought to be treated as an informer. He pointed to the proofs of his infamy and the presumption of partiality and calumny in his evidence, which should force upon the Court the duty of challenging it. He was indignant at the consideration which had been shown to him, and did not shrink from crying shame upon his colleagues, declaring that if they thought it necessary to apply torture, Tichelaer ought to be the first to be submitted to it. The president, Adrien Pauw, voted last. Honest, but weak and wanting in authority, he sided with Baan, but contented himself with observing that he saw no sufficient reason for acting harshly towards the accused, and timidly suggested a postponement until the next day 'for maturer consideration.' The judges being equally divided, proceeded to put the matter to the vote. Van Lier, who had been hitherto undecided, now no doubt made up his mind to go to extremes, and according to the short notice in

the report, torture was voted by a majority of one. Tichelaer was spared, in spite of the application of the Procurator-Fiscal Ruysch, and having nothing to fear for himself, he waited with misplaced confidence for the torture to draw from its victim the confession of an imaginary crime.

Still, remorse for the cruel treatment to which they were going to subject an innocent man seemed to weigh upon the judges' consciences. They appeared to hesitate before subjecting him to it. To satisfy Van Lier, they again examined Muys and Hoogewerf, and confronted them with the Ruard. Cornelius de Witt and Muys could not make their recollections agree. The former declared that he had charged Muys to inform the burgomaster of Dordrecht and the deputy bailiff of the interview he had had with Tichelaer, whilst Muys stated that he had done so of his own accord. But this contradiction was of no importance, since Cornelius de Witt, far from attempting to suppress the fact of the visit, had hastened to send for Muys to tell him of it. Besides, Muys and Hoogewerf differed from the accused as to the words they attributed to him when he was forced to sign the revocation of the Perpetual Edict, although these words, which were after all very much the same, had nothing whatever to do with the action brought against him. This last evidence, slight as it appeared, was nevertheless considered as a proof of guilt.

In vain was fresh evidence produced in favour of Cornelius de Witt by a second affidavit of the maid-servants of his house testifying that the account of the interview between Tichelaer and the Ruard, which they had repeated and which agreed with that of the accused, had been given to them by Cornelius de Witt's servant, who had remained at the door of his room, and before the latter had gone in to his master or could have concerted with him. In vain did John de Witt, in fear and anguish only too well justified by the threatening attitude of the judges, prepare in all haste a second petition signed by his father. It was presented to the Court by Jacob de Witt in the name of his son's wife and friends, who had added a memorial in which the strongest arguments were

brought forward against further prosecution and the application of torture. The judges refused to retract, and Cornelius Baan and the president, Pauw, being unable to oppose the decision of the other four, the executioner was summoned.

They were as much influenced probably by fear as by revenge, and of all passions fear is the most merciless. Already the popular hatred, roused to frenzy by the false report of a threatened attack upon the Prince of Orange, was clamouring for a victim. The women assembled before the door of Nierop, who had shown particular animosity against the accused, and demanded with fury the execution of Cornelius de Witt. 'The Court is bound to do justice,' says a letter to Bernard, 'and it is thought that the Ruard will be condemned to death.' His escape having been announced by the night-watchman, the false report, which he seemed to have been secretly commissioned to spread, roused the mob to action. They rushed to the prison, which they kept in a state of siege for the rest of the night and the following day, threatening to pillage the neighbouring houses, in which they were persuaded the prisoner had sought refuge. Warned of the tumult, some of the judges went in the early morning to the prison, and on their return publicly announced that they had found the accused in his room. But the ring-leaders refused to trust them, and Cornelius de Witt was obliged to show himself at the bars of his window to prove his presence. Nevertheless, it was necessary for the dispersal of the mob that the burgher company of the district should furnish a guard for the prison, or the rioters would soon have got possession of it.

These threatening manifestations took away the remaining scruples which had caused the judges to delay the torture of the accused. On the evening of August 18 the gaoler came to tell him that he had received orders not to give him his usual meal, without assigning any reason for this interdiction, which was intended, according to custom, to weaken the accused when he was given over to the executioner. Cornelius de Witt guessed what was awaiting him. 'Am I to be tortured?' he asked his gaoler. Receiving no answer, he showed neither

fear nor weakness. He was ready to brave suffering with the same courage that he had shown in braving death when he was with the fleet. He belonged to that race of martyrs who were equally armed against political and religious persecution, and whom suffering could not overcome.

The next morning he was conducted to the chamber of torture, a low and gloomy cell into which the light of day could scarcely penetrate, and which seems to have retained ineffaceable traces of the torments of which its narrow limits had so often been the theatre. The executioner, John Corstyaenzy, from Haarlem, was ready for his patient. He had just succeeded his father, who had been obliged to resign his employment because he had failed to cut off at one blow the head of Jacob van der Graef, John de Witt's assassin. It was his first experience in his cruel office, and he seemed to find a ferocious pleasure in it, having said the week before that 'if once he were placed behind the Ruard he would treat him without pity.' Nevertheless, when he found himself in the presence of his victim, who maintained the proud bearing of innocence, and saw a brave and illustrious servant of the country at his mercy, he could not hide his confusion, and 'begged his pardon for what he was about to do.' He requested him to take off some of his clothes, and Cornelius de Witt making no resistance, the torture was commenced.

His position as burgher and former burgomaster of Dordrecht prevented his being subjected to the usual first ordeal of accused persons, that of the whip, but the executioner had received orders to spare him no other severity. Having stretched him on the rack without waiting, in spite of his remonstrances, for the arrival of the judges, he fastened the sufferer's legs between two planks, furnished with a plate of lead, and a vice which could be screwed until the bones were broken. Startled by the pain, Cornelius de Witt could not contain himself: 'You rascal,' he cried to the executioner, 'if you dare to treat me like this I shall strike you.' 'What, complaining already?' replied the executioner; 'you have a good deal more to bear yet. Come, confess, for you will never be able

to resist the pain.' This taunt restored the Ruard's firmness. He hardened himself against the suffering, and only replied, 'How can I confess what I did not do?' Having bound the accused with his arms behind him, the executioner now attached a fifty-pound weight to his toes, and then lifted him up by means of a pulley to the ceiling. Swinging abruptly from side to side, with the toes nearly torn from his feet by the weight they were supporting, while the chafing of the pulley was bruising his arms—already extremely sensitive from rheumatism—Cornelius was in the agonies of torture when the councillors of the Court of Justice, accompanied by the Procurator-Fiscal Ruysch, suddenly entered, exclaiming, 'Confess! confess!'

He had before him those from whom he had more than once received tokens of deference, and who had now come to look on at his sufferings. He eloquently protested his innocence. 'You may tear my body in pieces,' he cried in a firm voice, 'but where there is nothing, you can find nothing.' Indignant at their persistence in urging him to confess his guilt, he appealed to them in return, 'You know well that I am innocent. I call God to witness, Who will be my judge and yours. It is before Him that I summon you to meet me.' The judges thus provoked were implacable and protracted his agony. They had him, however, lowered from the pulley and bound again to the rack. Knotted cords lacerated his body in three places, and whilst his limbs were being forcibly extended his head was fixed between four iron bars. Far from being overcome by such suffering, Cornelius de Witt found in it an indomitable strength which gave him a glorious victory over his judges. He proudly declared 'that had he been capable of conceiving a plan of assassination, he would have trusted to no arm but his own to execute it, and would not have had recourse to the services of a wretch such as his accuser.'

To encourage himself heroically to defy their cruelty he began, according to the generally received account, to recite with spirit the lines of Horace, which he had probably just been reading in the volume that had soothed his hours of captivity, and which he might well apply to himself:

Justum ac tenacem propositi virum
 Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
 Non vultus instantis tyranni
 Mente quatit solida.

According to other writers, it was during his captivity that Cornelius de Witt took pleasure in this quotation, and the testimony of the executioner, which can scarcely be rejected, is that before his judges his words were less grandiloquent but more in harmony with his religious sentiments. His Christian faith had strengthened him against suffering by giving his soul the dominion over his body, and he thanked God in these terms, which bear the stamp of authenticity, 'Oh, my God, I proclaim Thee a great God, for I feel no further pain.' Those who had been witnesses of his invincible courage had nothing to do but to acknowledge themselves beaten. They retired, leaving the noble patient shattered by the torture which had lasted, an hour and a half according to some accounts, three hours according to others. They had nothing but the shame and humiliation of useless torture. It was in vain that one of the judges commanded the executioner to keep it secret, desiring him to let it be believed that it had been a mere formality. The executioner himself felt some remorse for this deception, and on his death-bed, a few months later, having then no hope of earthly recompense, his conscience forced him to ask forgiveness of Cornelius de Witt's widow. The letter, in which he gives her an account of her husband's agony, and which has been preserved in the family records, proves that he did not spare him. He protested that not for all the goods in the world would he again torture anyone as he had tortured him. 'I tremble when I think of it,' he added; 'and may God have mercy on me!' This declaration, whose authenticity is undoubted, is confirmed by the registers of the Court of Justice. In spite of the pains taken to get rid of all the documents of the trial, the order for the payment of the executioner's expenses has been discovered. This is what we find under the date of August 19, 1672: 'To using the pulley, 3 florins. To stretching on rack, 3 florins. For the journey, 8 florins. To two days' lodging, 6 florins. Total, 20 florins.'

This bill suffices without any other evidence. It forms in a few words a certificate of indelible opprobrium to the judges.

Their work of iniquity was shamefully consummated. The refusal of the accused to confess, in spite of his being put to the torture, made it impossible for them to condemn him to death for the crime imputed to him. No evidence but that of the accuser having been produced, it seemed that they could not now fail to admit his innocence. But the judges had not the courage even at this late hour to do their duty. Instead of at last doing him that justice which was due to him, they dared not refuse a final satisfaction to his enemies. Whilst they were deliberating, the secretary, Adrien Pots, represented to them that two former judgments of the Court might serve them as precedents for a condemnation without any necessity for assigning a reason. It was no doubt by a majority only that they decided on following this advice, which released them from a dilemma. They took advantage of it to pronounce judgment without any allusion to the accusation brought against Cornelius de Witt, declaring him to be deprived of his office and dignities, banishing him for ever from the province of Holland, and condemning him to pay the expenses of the trial, which were assessed afterwards at 983 florins. The next day, Saturday, August 20, at half-past eight o'clock in the morning, the judges sent word to the Ruard that they were coming to make his sentence known to him. In vain did Cornelius de Witt demand that it should be read at the bar of the Court. Under pretence of preventing further riots amongst the people, they went to the prison to inform him of his condemnation. It was thus expressed: 'The Court of Holland having seen and examined the papers and documents delivered over to them by the Procurator-Fiscal of the said Court for the prosecution of Master Cornelius de Witt, formerly burgo-master of Dordrecht and ruard of the district of Putten, now detained in the prison of the said Court; and also his examination and confronting with the witnesses, as well as all that has been put forward on the part of the said prisoner; and having examined into all that could bear upon this matter, declare the said prisoner to be deprived of all his offices and dignities, and

banished from the Province of Holland and West Friesland, never to return under pain of more severe punishment; and condemn him in the costs and expenses of justice, according to the assessment made by the said Court. Determined and concluded by MM. Adrien Pauw (Lord of Bennebroeck, president), Albert Nierop, William Goes, Frederick van Lier, Cornelius Baan, Matthew Gool, Judges of the Court of Holland and West Friesland, and given at the gate of the said prison of the said Court. August 20, 1672. Adrien Pots, present.

Cornelius de Witt strongly protested against this sentence, and demanded to know the grounds of it. 'All the world,' he said, 'should know what I have done.' The councillors persisted in their refusal, and replied that the Court was not called upon to give any reason. Unable to contain his indignation, he exclaimed as they were going, and almost in their presence, 'What judges!' It was not a judicial but a political verdict which they had pronounced, as if in conformity with orders received, as one of them, Van Lier, afterwards gave it to be understood, 'apologising for being able to say no more.' At any rate, in condemning an innocent man out of servile obedience to the passions and hatred of the mob, they encouraged instead of trying to appease them; and their iniquitous sentence was thus the prelude to the sanguinary drama in which the two brothers fell victims to the same death.

The sentence of banishment had just been made known to Cornelius de Witt, when the gaoler's maid-servant arrived at John de Witt's house to request him to go to his brother. Contrary to the received idea that the Grand Pensionary's summons to the prison was a trap by means of a false message, it was the Ruard himself who had sent for him. He wished to consult him as to his conduct, whether he should submit to the judgment of the Court or appeal to the Grand Council. 'Go to my brother, and ask him in my name to come to me,' he said to the gaoler, Van Bossi, who had gone up to his room after the reading of the sentence to congratulate him on being set at liberty. Such was the account given six months later by the gaoler himself and Roland Kinschot, one of the members of the Grand Council. It is confirmed, at least indirectly, by

the testimony of John de Witt's servant, Van der Wissel, who gave evidence at the inquiry held after the assassination of the two brothers, and who was present at their interview when they met in the prison. The deposition, in which he gave an account of the words he had faithfully recorded, makes no allusion to the surprise they could not have failed to show had Cornelius not expected his brother's visit.

The Grand Pensionary was in the hands of his barber when his sister, Joanna de Zwyndrecht, came to tell him of the arrival of the gaoler's maid, and to announce the request with which the latter was charged. Eager to respond to his brother's appeal, he did not hesitate to go to him, in spite of the entreaties of his eldest daughter, Anna, and the tears of his other children, terrified at the perils to which their father might be exposed. Accustomed to brave rather than fear danger, he calmed their anxiety, and at about nine o'clock in the morning left the house to which he was never to return. He had but a few steps to take to reach the prison. His father, now eighty years of age, was very nearly going with him. Jacob de Witt was reading in the garden of the house, which he occupied with his son, and which extended behind the Kneuterdijk along Duke Street, when John de Witt left it without giving him notice, so as to spare him fresh anxiety. He lamented this more than once during the fatal day, declaring that he could not console himself for being separated from his sons, whose fate he wished to share.

As a measure of precaution, and also perhaps with an idea of providing the necessary formalities for his brother's release, John de Witt had taken with him his two clerks, Bacherus and Ounewaller, as well as his faithful servant, Van der Wissel. He had, moreover, given orders to his coachman to come and fetch him. Presuming that his brother after being tortured would not be able to walk from the prison, he intended to take him in his carriage to his country house near the Hague, where the exile could in safety receive the farewells of his family. Having arrived at the prison without seeing any sign of disturbance to make him uneasy, he found two sentinels of the burgher

company, who had been on guard since the day on which the false report of Cornelius de Witt's escape had roused the mob. The door having been opened to him, he at once made for the room pointed out to him, ascended the winding staircase leading up to it, and stopped at the end of a corridor where he crossed the threshold of the cell. What a meeting, and in what a place!

Four months previously the two brothers had parted at the summit of honour. They met again in a prison: one bruised and bleeding from the hands of the executioner and under the weight of an unjust condemnation, the other still bearing the scars resulting from the attack in which he so nearly lost his life, and forced, as if in expiation for public misfortunes, to resign those powers as Grand Pensionary which he had only used for the good of his country.

They were both accustomed to a certain dignity of manner, and, having made no request to be left alone, they seemed to be on their guard against all expression of feeling. According to the evidence of the gaoler and of John de Witt's servant, who, as well as the two clerks, were witnesses to their interview, John said to Cornelius, 'How are you, brother? I have never seen you since your return from the fleet.' Cornelius replied, 'And I have not seen you since your wounds and your illness.' Being questioned by the Grand Pensionary as to the end and motives of the sentence recorded against him, he pointed out that by a flagrant breach of the law it made no accusation against him and only pronounced the decree of banishment. Then advertg to other irregularities in the proceedings, and having in a few words told of his sufferings and again protested his innocence, he announced to his brother his intention of appealing to the Grand Council. The latter vainly endeavoured to dissuade him from it. Any delay in his brother's release seemed perilous, and was not compensated for by any hope of his obtaining that justice which political passions refused him. He represented to him, moreover, that no appeal would be valid, as in criminal cases the decision of the Court was final. But Cornelius was determined. The flaws in the form for the instructions for his trial and in the

judgment pronounced, seemed to him to allow of a right of appeal. The recent appointment of his brother as a member of the Grand Council gave him confidence, no doubt, in the jurisdiction which he thought he had a right to invoke.

John de Witt wished to see the sentence before he came to any determination, and he sent his chief clerk, Bacherus, to ask for it at the record office. He found some threatening groups assembled before the prison, and had scarcely started—'trembling with fright, and with a face like death,' according to an eyewitness—when he was pursued with cries of 'Where is the rascal? He must not escape us either.' Bacherus, retaining his presence of mind, instead of hastening on mingled with the crowd, and those who were in pursuit passed on without recognising him. Not seeing him return, the Grand Pensionary began to get uneasy. His second clerk, Ounewaller, had just informed him that his carriage had been sent away by the ringleaders, who were gathering round the prison to oppose the release of Cornelius de Witt, exclaiming that the traitor was being taken from them to be carried home in triumph. Already reproaching himself for having so rashly summoned the Grand Pensionary, the Ruard feared that he had brought about the ruin of him who had been so dear to him during his life, and might still be the support of his family after his death. He urged him to go, promising to trust to the advice he might give him when he had studied the sentence of the Court at his leisure.

Yielding to his entreaties, the Grand Pensionary consented to take his departure, having been about an hour with his brother, whereas he would not have been likely so to prolong the interview had his summons to the prison been a trap. He descended to the vestibule, and at half-past ten the door was opened to him, in company with his clerk and his servant. As he was crossing the threshold he was stopped by the sentinels, who crossed their muskets before him. 'No one can go out,' said one of them, roughly pushing him back. 'Why not?' asked John de Witt; 'you know very well who I am.' Some others amongst those on guard ran up saying, 'You cannot leave without an order.' 'Whose order do you require?' he

asked. 'That of our officer,' they replied. The cry of 'Fire! fire!' then rose from the crowd. One of the burghers discharged his musket, but it missed fire. Without a thought of the danger, John de Witt would perhaps have attempted to force a passage if the terrified gaoler had not driven him back into the prison, the door of which he quickly shut.

The Grand Pensionary had been so violently pushed back that he fell. When he got up the gaoler observed that his countenance was agitated, as if a vision of his approaching death had appeared to him in all its horror. Quickly composing himself, he asked to be conducted back to his brother. A last ray of hope deluded him when the lieutenant on guard, a bookseller named Gerard Asselyn, accompanied by the burgher, Van Os, who had stopped him at the door of the prison and seemed to regret not having allowed him to go out, came to him and promised to use his influence with the captain of the guard to have him set at liberty. But he did not return, being detained by the other burghers on guard. Not yet losing all confidence, John de Witt questioned the gaoler as to whether there was any other exit from the prison. He received a reply in the negative, and gave vent several times to the words, 'I wish I were out of this; how shall I get out?' He was a prisoner in his turn, and had but to resign himself to the fate which awaited him, consoling himself at any rate with the thought of sharing it with his brother.

The fury of the mob only waited a signal to be let loose. Dark threats had been publicly made the preceding evening and murderous placards had been posted up. At half-past seven in the morning the following lines were to be read on the door of the New Church: 'Lucifer calls from Hell, "Cornelius de Witt must come at once; but his head must be cut off first. His brother also is a villain, he must be made to come with him." Lucifer calls from Hell, "When are the De Witts coming?" The burghers call from the Hague, "Expect them to-night."' Tichelaer, on his side, detained in prison until Cornelius de Witt's sentence had been made known to him, had had time to confer with the Ruard's declared enemy, the Councillor Nierop. In an interview, overheard by Ruysch's

clerk, which he afterwards gave an account of, Nierop informed Tichelaer of the judgment which was about to be pronounced, expressing his regret that he had not been able to obtain a severer punishment than exile. 'It is with you,' he said, in a low voice, 'that it now remains to stir up the people, by making them believe that a culprit has been spared and his accomplices shielded from justice.' He exhorted him to pave the way for a riot, and cause one of the brothers to be massacred in prison before he got out, and the other at his residence, where it was supposed he would remain. Eager to carry out these iniquitous instructions, Tichelaer uttered such threats that the terrified gaoler appealed, though in vain, to the judges, begging them not to release him until Cornelius de Witt should have been set at liberty and safe from his vengeance.

They reassured him by declaring that they would see to the maintenance of order. To prevent the release of the prisoner until he could make certain of his victim, Tichelaer, as soon as the prison door was opened to him, gave his name to the burgher who was on guard, and announced that Cornelius de Witt was going to follow him. 'Gentlemen,' he said to them, 'the Ruard has escaped you. He is banished from Holland, and there is an end of it.' They cried out, 'That shall not be, or there will be the devil to pay. We will shoot him first.' Having thus given a first hint, Tichelaer stopped the passers-by whom he met in the inner court of the palace—the Binnenhof—and informed them that Cornelius de Witt's life had been spared, and that his torture had been a mere formality. He added that the judges had acknowledged his guilt, since he, the accuser, had received no punishment; and denounced as a scandal the judgment which he said was equivalent to an acquittal. He thus encouraged those who were collecting around him to take the law into their own hands. These suggestions circulating from group to group were keeping up the irritation of the people, when Tichelaer was suddenly informed, by some one who came up to him, that John de Witt had gone to visit his brother in the prison. Seeing at once how easily he could fell both victims with one blow, he hastened the accomplishment of the crime he had undertaken

to carry out. He left the public-house, where he was seated with some other ruffians like himself—amongst others a man named Van der Mossel—‘whom he publicly embraced with much show of friendship’—and went to the window of the prison gateway to harangue the crowd in these terms, which are certified to by the accounts of the day: ‘This dog is about to go out with his brother, who is with him; keep him in. The time has come: revenge yourselves on the rascals!’ ‘Murder! Treason! We will have them both!’ howled those who heard him, whilst the burghers responded to their shouts by cries of ‘To arms!’ It was the signal for a race, ‘in which the women joined armed with sticks and staves,’ and all the approaches to the prison were soon surrounded by crowds whose sinister outcries could be heard by the two brothers.

Nothing but the employment of public force legally set in action could now save them, and this lay in the hands of the councillor deputies, the executive power having been made over to them by the States of Holland. Six of these only were present at the Hague on August 20, 1672, and, some by their inaction, others by their intervention, were thus responsible for the massacre which they might have prevented. Their president was Philip Jacob Boetselaer, Lord of Asperen. His father, the friend and confidant of William II., had been compromised in the prosecution for corruption of Muysch, the Secretary of the States-General, and excluded from the order of the nobles. He had married Muysch’s daughter, whose sister was the wife of Buat, a former agent of the Orange party, who had paid with his life for his intrigues with the King of England. D’Asperen had done his best to cause this to be forgotten by again violently taking up the republican party from motives of ambition, but as soon as he thought that the restoration was inevitable he placed himself at the disposal of the Prince of Orange, who afterwards made him Master of his Household. The important functions with which he was invested giving him a foremost place in the events of the day, he was led—either from weakness of character, party spirit, or perhaps from a secret desire to avenge the death of his brother-in-law, Buat—to be guilty of the neglect of all his duties.

Not one, indeed, of the councillor deputies did his duty. Bosveldt of Haarlem alone remained at his post, but only to share with D’Asperen in his weakness. The others all disappeared in the afternoon, to escape, for fear of the danger, from the mission confided to them. It was thus that Beveren acted, fearing, no doubt, that he was too much under suspicion to be able to protect them, and preferring to take the cowardly part of holding himself aloof. The official report of their first meeting on August 20, the only record which has been preserved, shows that they had all assembled in the morning to consult as to sending to Groningen. Other more pressing measures soon took up their attention. The first whispers of a popular tumult, which they heard in their committee-room, gave them the alarm, and they at once proceeded to give information of it to the States of Holland, who were assembled to choose a successor to John de Witt.

After hearing D’Asperen’s report, the States, in the absence of several members—amongst others Beverningh and Van Beuningen, detained, one in camp and the other on a diplomatic mission at Brussels—hastened to consider what precautions should be taken to insure public tranquillity. Following the advice of the nobles, they commissioned the councillor deputies to place under arms the three troops of cavalry to which the garrison at the Hague was reduced, and to make an arrangement with the magistrates of the town to assemble the most trustworthy of the burgher companies. They then hastened to send a messenger to the Prince of Orange, whose head-quarters were about eight leagues from the Hague, to ask him to come as soon as possible and restore order by his presence, sending also reinforcements without delay. At the suggestion, moreover, of Cornelius Hop, the Pensionary of Amsterdam, they decided to remain sitting to consider the necessary orders to be given.

The small troop of cavalry which the States of Holland had at their disposal was placed under the orders of a distinguished officer, Count Claude de Tilly, who was distantly related to the family of the great captain of the Thirty Years’

War, and had entered the service of the States-General, who gave him after the death of William II. the chief command of their army. The three companies, whose captains besides Count Tilly were M. de Steenhuyzen, and his son, who bore the title of Lord of Malde, were sent to take up their positions, one in the outer court of the palace of the States—the Buytenhof—where the guard-house of the garrison stood, the two others at the entrance of the Kneuterdijk avenue in the square, so as to cover the approaches to the prison on the two accessible sides. They received orders to maintain communication by keeping free the passage through the centre of the prison, which joined the court and the square. They only numbered 300 men, and showed a disposition which made their loyalty doubtful. The detachment which was sent early to the outer court of the palace, having encountered the most undisciplined of the burgher companies, made way for it to pass. At the same time the soldiers, having heard the rallying cry of the insurrectionists, 'Orange op, Witte onder,' raised their hats saying, 'We are of the same opinion.'

Still so loyal and bold a commander as Count Tilly sufficed to insure military discipline. The States had given him full powers. By the wording of their resolution the councillor deputies were charged 'to give all orders and take all necessary measures for the employment of the troops of cavalry now in garrison at the Hague, in putting down all meetings and gatherings, so as not only to prevent by the most vigorous measures any acts of insolence or violence, but to separate and dissipate the crowd, with instructions if gentle measures failed to fire upon the rioters and refractory persons and oblige them to retreat, employing force of arms to re-establish tranquillity everywhere. The immediate execution of these orders might have quelled the riot and allowed of the captives being released, but the councillor deputies thought themselves at liberty to modify them.' They enjoined the cavalry to remain only on the defensive within reach of the prison, and to await further orders from the States. Although wishing to use force against the mob they dared not risk it, fearing that a general riot would end in the pillaging, ruining, and killing of all in the place.

The arming of the burgher companies, to the number of from twelve to fifteen hundred men, had intimidated the councillor deputies. Against the advice of the States, all had been indiscriminately called to arms. Distributed in six divisions in the different quarters of the town, they were distinguished by the colours of their flags. The first company—orange, blue, and white—which had furnished the prison guard, took up its post in the outer court. It was the most peaceably disposed. Four others, more or less wavering and unreliable, took up their position in the square and the Kneuterdijk avenue. The last, bearing a blue flag, and comprising the artisans of the suburbs, whose attitude was the most threatening, was kept at a distance on the Singel canal on the other side of the palace of the States. To cover their responsibility, the councillor deputies thought it advisable to confer with the municipal magistrates. The former burgomaster of the town, John Mas, colonel of the burghers, and the pensionary of the Council, Jacob van den Hœven, too confidently declared that public peace would be re-established if some of the burgher officers went to Cornelius de Witt and his brother, under pretext of keeping guard over them until the Prince of Orange had given his orders. The councillor deputies communicated this proposal to the Court of Justice, which gave its consent and reported it to the States of Holland with a view to re-assuring them.

Whilst these proposals were taking the place of the thorough measures which should have been adopted, the disturbance was spreading through the burgher ranks. Mistrusting their comrades, some of the burghers of the first company wished to satisfy themselves of the presence of the prisoners. Having in vain attempted to get the outer door of the prison opened to them, they entered the yard by a party wall, and twelve of them, accompanied by two officers, passed through the inner wickets, which the gaoler was forced to open to them. Six of them with one officer detached themselves from this group to be conducted to the two brothers' room. They were received with a politeness which disarmed them.

John de Witt told them that he had always had confidence

in the townspeople, and would have no objection to follow them blindly in the midst of any danger, adding many gracious and persuasive words calculated to touch them. They retired satisfied, but could not succeed in appeasing the tumult which raged outside. The burghers of the other companies, not choosing to remain inactive, were searching the adjoining houses to make certain that no secret passages could favour an escape. A mason, named Klaptas, climbed on to the prison roof to be in readiness to fire if he saw either of the brothers attempting to get away. Mastering their anxiety, and only desirous of concealing it from each other, John and Cornelius de Witt showed themselves resigned to the fate which threatened them. Whilst partaking of a frugal meal, which John de Witt had calmly demanded of the gaoler, who was confounded by his unconcern of danger, the terrified maid came to tell them that the burghers outside were getting more and more excited. 'What do they want?' asked Cornelius, with proud calmness. 'To kill you,' she could not refrain from saying. 'If it is me they wish to harm,' he replied, 'let them come, I am here.' He had no hope left but that of saving his brother.

They had both finished their meal, when at about two o'clock Ruysch, somewhat tardily, presented himself. He brought with him the two burgher officers who were told off to guard them in accordance with the instructions of the magistrates of the Hague and the judges. To excuse their presence Ruysch alleged that Cornelius de Witt, not having yet submitted to the sentence of the Court, must be for the present kept under surveillance. John de Witt therefore concluded that he would not be detained, and was about to leave the room, hoping that when once more at liberty he might insure his brother's release. He was stopped by the burgher officers who had accompanied the Procurator-Fiscal. The latter, who had no further pretext for prolonging his captivity, could only say, 'Have a little patience, sir, the people are too excited.' John de Witt contented himself with procuring the release of his second clerk, Ounewaller, and his servant, Van der Wissel, who only consented to go in obedience

to him, after receiving his directions for placing his children in safety.

Ruysch hastily left with them, thus basely deserting his post. He left the officers who had accompanied him in the prison, and upon them now devolved the fate of the two brothers. These latter, after his departure, tried to win them over to their side. They made them sit down at their table, offering them wine, whilst John de Witt, whose presence of mind was imperturbable, employed all his arts of persuasion to convince them of the Ruard's innocence. His explanations, accompanied by appeals to their Christian principles, soon won them the good-will of their guardians, but too late to save them.

Still the time gained was something towards their rescue, and the firmness of Count Tilly gave hopes that the sedition might be held in check. He skilfully managed to surround the first company, which had charge of the prison, and on which he thought he could rely if he managed to cut it off from the others. To keep these latter away, he gradually drove them back from the square, which he wished to clear, in spite of the remonstrances of the burghers, who tried to force the ranks of the cavalry by pressing upon them so as to hamper their movements. The more determined hoped to intimidate him by pretending that they were going to fire. But Count Tilly, courageously advancing towards them and addressing their officers, asked them if they wished to fill the Hague with blood and slaughter, adding that they might possibly be the first to suffer for it. The officers, not caring to expose themselves, hastened to reply that such was not their intention, and contented themselves with requesting Count Tilly to withdraw with his troops. But he haughtily refused, and resolutely continued at his post.

The leaders of the plot, seeing that they could get nothing out of him through fear, had recourse to a subterfuge to rid themselves of him. A rumour had spread since the morning that, under the usual pretext of treason on the part of the magistrates, 2,000 peasants were on the march to the Hague, with the intention of sacking the town and repeating the acts of violence which had been committed at Delft. The

States of Holland had therefore enjoined their councillor deputies to arrange with the magistrates of the Hague to have the drawbridges raised and to put canals and ditches in a state of defence. These fears, though exaggerated, were not altogether imaginary. The inhabitants of some of the villages in the neighbourhood of the Hague had in fact assembled and shown some signs of seditious intentions, but the Receiver-General of the United Provinces, Jacob de Volberguen, who was visiting his property, had met them, and having got their pastor to harangue them, they promptly dispersed. This report had possibly been spread with a view to the deliverance of the Grand Pensionary and the Ruard, by obliging the burgher companies to free the approaches to the prison and proceed to the defence of the entrance to the town. It only led, however, to the ruin of the two brothers, by giving their enemies a pretext for sending away the cavalry and thus depriving them of their last support.

Taking advantage of this false report, the delegates of the burgher companies, first two sergeants, then two officers, presented themselves to the councillor deputies, to ask them to give directions to the cavalry to leave the town and repulse the peasants if they approached. Either from unjustifiable imprudence or from shameful fear, the councillor deputies had already separated without appointing any future meeting. Their president, D'Asperen, accompanied by Bosveldt of Haarlem and the Secretary of the States, Simon van Beaumont, had gone to the house of the clerk of their committee, De Wilde, close to the Town Hall. After having refused the sergeants, Asperen and Bosveldt were weak enough to enter into a discussion with the officers and ask them if they would undertake to guarantee the security of the prisoners. Although the officers promised to see to this, the councillor deputies, reduced to two, not a sufficient number to come to any decision, were still hesitating when they were joined by the magistrates of the Hague, John Mas and Van der Høeven, who had already been in communication with them earlier in the day. These latter were not in connivance with the rioters, as a month later they were deposed as being suspected by the

Orange faction, but they nevertheless made themselves the representatives of the policy of concession, which flatters itself it can quell disturbance by disarming resistance. They represented to the councillor deputies the necessity for at once drawing off the cavalry, demanding this as a pledge of peace.

Faithless to the instructions given them by the States of Holland, as well as to their own promises, D'Asperen and Bosveldt shamefully acquiesced in the demand made of them. They sent a verbal order to Count Tilly to give up his post and occupy the avenues of the town. Not believing it possible that they could be either so weak or so wicked as to become the accomplices of the rioters, Count Tilly, in spite of the vociferations of the mob and the clamours of the burghers, declared that he would only obey a written order. He foresaw the disastrous consequences of a retreat, and was determined not to be made responsible for it. In spite of his courageous refusal, the councillor deputies had neither scruples nor remorse. Meekly submitting to the will of the populace, which had been forced upon them, they charged their clerk, De Wilde, to draw up instructions to be signed by D'Asperen, which Count Tilly must obey. They enjoined him to withdraw with the two troops of cavalry which occupied the square. He was to employ them in guarding the four bridges which served as gateways to the Hague, whilst the third company, commanded by M. de Steenhuyzen, remained on the look-out, in the outer court of the palace. When he received this fatal order Count Tilly had no longer any doubt as to the fate of the two brothers. 'I obey,' he said, 'but MM. de Witt are lost.' He was the only man on this lamentable day who did his duty. He kept the orders given him to the day of his death; and eleven years later, being quartered at Maestricht, he gave them to the Grand Pensionary's cousin, Vivien, to read, deploring the obligation he had been under to submit to them.

His departure left the way open to the assassins. Their leader was Henry Verhoef, a goldsmith, and member of the company under the blue flag, whose actual captain he was, and a deadly enemy of the brothers De Witt, for whom he

intended the two balls with which he had that morning loaded his musket. His principal accomplices were Van Bankhem, sheriff; Van Baelen, surgeon; Van Soenen, notary; D'Assigny, engraver; Maas, sculptor; Van Vaalen, postman; Vredemborg, miller; Van Dorsten, wine merchant; and Van Olten, provision dealer. The obscurity of their names ought not to shield them from infamy.

It was to the improvised head of this band of ruffians that the magistrates of the Hague had now to look for the deliverance and safety of their prisoners. With this hope they submitted to the humiliation of a parley with Verhoef, appearing to accept him as an ambassador from the rioters. The colonel of the burghers, John Mas, went to seek him with his company, and conducted him to a neighbouring house, where he implored him to spare the De Witts, assuring him that the magistrates of the Hague would be eternally grateful to him for so great a service and would reward him for it. Verhoef interrupted him with these threatening words, 'Those who intercede for rascals are no better than themselves,' and having emptied two glasses of wine he returned to his company and gave the order to march.

Notice was immediately given to the members of the magistracy, who were assembled in the Town Hall, with the exception of the old bailiff, De Veer, uncle of John and Cornelius de Witt, whose great age excused him. They immediately sent the burgomaster Groenevelt to Verhoef, to beg him to come to them. He consented, and reassured by the presence of a post of burghers who were keeping guard before the Town Hall and who promised to come to his assistance at the first call, Verhoef entered the council chamber unarmed, and the magistrates had the baseness to welcome him humbly. Verhoef recalled them to what was due to themselves; refusing to take the chair offered him, he begged them to be seated and to cover their heads. Groenevelt spared no arguments to persuade him to leave the Grand Pensionary and the Ruard under the guardianship of two delegates from each of the burgher companies until the arrival of the Prince of Orange. But Verhoef was immovable, declaring that he

had other things to do than to guard traitors. 'What do you mean to do?' asked Van der Høeven. 'To drag the De Witts out of prison and break their necks,' replied Verhoef, 'even if I have to do it myself. Only have patience for half an hour, and I will place their hearts in your hands.' Horror closed the magistrates' mouths, as Verhoef at parting threw them this last menace, 'If you belong to the De Witts' faction you are all lost.' They ended, however, by plucking up courage, and fearing lest the blood of the innocent should fall upon their heads they so far retrieved themselves as to make one last effort to save them, though unfortunately too late.

Whilst the councillor deputies and the members of the States were holding aloof, the magistrates decided that they would go in a body to the prison to interpose their authority. But Van Bankhem and the former burgomaster, Pieterse, who had been indicted for embezzlement, preceded them through back streets, directing their followers to intercept the progress of the municipal authorities, and before the latter could arrive the signal for the final acts of violence had been given. As soon as he left the Town Hall, Verhoef rejoined his company, which advanced with loud outcries upon the outer court of the palace, without any opposition on the part of the last detachment of cavalry which had remained after Count Tilly's departure in spite of the demands of the better disposed townspeople. They thus got near the prison, the approaches to which they sought to occupy. The orange, white, and blue company had, it is true, remained on guard, and faithful to their orders closed their ranks against the newcomers. Fearing, however, a collision, and threatened with an attack, they ended by giving way, whilst Verhoef, having spread a report that it was only a question of transferring Cornelius de Witt and his brother from the prison to the Town Hall, went to satisfy himself that the companies stationed in the square and in the Vivien avenue would not interfere. His accomplices waited impatiently for him on the threshold of the prison, before which the blue company was arrayed. His cry of 'Drag the rascals out from here!' was responded to by a discharge of musketry. The door was riddled with

balls, one of which penetrated to the wall of the staircase, which bears the mark to this day.

Strongly bolted and protected by an iron bar, the door withstood this attack. Verhoef was preparing to break it down with hammers which he sent for to a blacksmith in the neighbourhood, when the gaoler, terrified at the threats uttered against him, consented to open it. It was now four o'clock. Verhoef and his companions burst into the prison, seized the gaoler, who let himself be maltreated rather than conduct them to the prisoners, tore the keys of the rooms from him, and rushed up the stairs into the one which was the last refuge of the De Witts. It was open, and the assassins had but to cross the threshold to find themselves in the presence of their victims.

The two brothers had heard them come without a tremor. Broken down by his sufferings from the torture, Cornelius de Witt was stretched upon his bed, his head covered by a cap, and wearing a loose dressing-gown. John de Witt, who had kept on his velvet mantle, was seated beside a table at the foot of the bed. To fortify himself against the terrors of death and the agonies of the last hour, he was reading the Bible to his brother.

The burgher officers who were guarding them tried in vain to protect them from their murderers; they were violently repulsed, accused of having been bribed, and threatened with sharing the fate of the two prisoners. Impatient to bring matters to an end, Verhoef, followed by his band, ran to Cornelius de Witt's bed, and roughly pulling back the curtains, cried, 'You must die, traitor! Pray to God and prepare yourself.' 'What harm have I done you?' asked his victim calmly. 'You attempted the life of the Prince. Make haste and get up at once,' replied Verhoef. Proud and resigned, as he had been before the executioner, with his hands clasped, the Ruard offered up a last prayer at the moment when a blow from the butt end of a musket, directed against him and turned aside by Verhoef, struck one of the posts of the bed and shattered it. He was desired to dress himself, and whilst putting on one of his stockings was so threatened with

a dagger that he had to get up at once. Separated from his brother on the entry of the assassins, John de Witt, after a futile attempt to get hold of a sword that he might die defending himself, boldly advanced towards them and asked whether it was their intention to kill him also. 'Yes,' was the reply, 'traitor, rascal, thief, you shall have the same fate as your brother.' At the same moment the notary Van Soenen struck him on the back of the head with a pike, causing blood to flow. The Grand Pensionary quietly took off his hat and bound the wound with his handkerchief. Folding his arms, he cried with a steady voice, 'Do you want to take my life? Then strike me down at your feet,' and calmly presented his breast. Verhoef interposed to prevent the brothers being murdered in the prison: 'It is on the scaffold that these rascals must die,' he said, wishing thus to avenge the executions of Buat and Van der Graef.

By his orders John and Cornelius de Witt were dragged from their room and violently pushed towards the winding staircase, of which they had twenty-nine steps to descend. The Grand Pensionary was hurried away first, whilst his brother, wounded by a blow from a plank and nearly knocked over, was precipitated down the first flight. Just able to turn, he held out his arm to him, their hands joined in one rapid pressure, and with a last look they cried to one another, 'Farewell, brother!' Having reached the bottom of the stairs, they were unable to exchange another word and lost sight of each other.

Verhoef had made John de Witt go first, keeping close to him as if to take upon himself the executioner's office. Troubled, as he himself declared, by the fire of his glance, he would not have ventured to deal the first blow, even with the aid of two accomplices, had John de Witt held any weapon in his hand with which to defend himself. He confessed even that he was confounded by the coolness with which the Grand Pensionary, having nothing left to save but his honour, exonerated himself from the charge of treason brought against him, saying, 'If all had acted like me, not a single town would have been surrendered.' At the sound of these

words, the murderers, thinking that their prey was escaping them, accused Verhoef of accepting John de Witt's purse and watch as a bribe. To exculpate himself, he pushed him away and gave him up to the band of madmen who were waiting at the door of the prison to conduct him and his brother sixty paces farther towards the scaffold in sight of his house on the Kneuterdijk. Their frenzy prevented them from following the instructions they had received, and the two prisoners were massacred before they had reached the usual place of execution. Dragged rather than led after his brother, behind whom he had remained, Cornelius de Witt was the first to perish under the blows of the assassins who seized him. 'What do you want me to do?' he asked them; 'where do you want me to go?'

Forced to advance at the point of the daggers and pikes, he had scarcely got beyond the archway of the prison, and had just entered the square which adjoins it, when, being closely pressed against the railing of the pond, he stumbled, fell to the ground and was trampled under foot. Two burghers, a wine merchant named Van Ryp and a butcher named Louw, struck him down with the butt ends of their muskets. He was raising himself by his hands when an engraver, Cornelius d'Assigny, lieutenant of the company under the blue flag, struck him with his dagger, whilst at the same time a sailor cut his head open with a hatchet. They then threw themselves upon him, trampling on his body.

His brother's death struggle was simultaneous with his own. Leaving the prison bareheaded, his face bleeding from the blow he had received with the pike, John de Witt had covered his face with his mantle, using it as a shield to ward off the blows which threatened him on every side.

Delivered from Verhoef, who, himself struck by an ill-directed blow from a musket, had found it dangerous to remain beside him, he still sought to escape, and kept repeating to those who surrounded him, 'What are you doing? This is not what you wanted.' But the pitiless burghers of the company under the blue flag repulsed him, closing their ranks when he attempted with much difficulty to force a passage through the

double line which he could not overcome. He was turning back, overwhelmed with horror on hearing the ferocious outcries which announced the murder of his brother, when he was struck from behind by a pistol shot fired by a lieutenant of marines, John van Vaalen, whose brother was one of Verhoef's band. Seeing him waver and then fall, the assassin cried out, 'Behold the downfall of the Perpetual Edict.'

Bruised and dying, John de Witt still had strength to raise his head and hold up his clasped hands to Heaven, when he overheard this last insult, which was not spared him: 'You pray to God! You do not believe there is one. You have long since denied Him by your treason and your villainies.' At the same moment another ruffian, an innkeeper named Peter Verhaguen, left the ranks of the company, and having failed in discharging his gun, which missed fire, he struck the Grand Pensionary a violent blow on the head with it which knocked him down insensible, whilst several burghers of the same company, amongst others a butcher named Christopher de Haan, fired point blank at him and ended his life. It was then half-past four in the afternoon.

Of the two great citizens thus sacrificed as enemies of the country they had faithfully and gloriously served, there remained but two corpses, and even they were not spared. Having laid them together, the burghers of the company nearest the prison forming a circle fired a volley as a sign of rejoicing. The bodies were then carried to the scaffold by means of the muskets, the crossbelts forming ropes, to drag them. A sailor tied them back to back and hung them by their feet to the lower rungs of the gibbet, which was constructed in the form of a strappado, exclaiming that such culprits were not worthy to be hung by their heads. Their clothes were all torn off and divided in fragments. One of the principal actors in the scene, Adrien van Vaalen, having obtained possession of John de Witt's velvet mantle, ran through the streets with it, crying, 'Behold the rags of the traitor, the great John!'

Amidst the yells of a mob thirsting for blood, the two victims were given up after their death to the most savage treatment. The first two fingers of John de Witt's right

hand were first cut off as if in expiation of the use he had made of them in signing and swearing to the Perpetual Edict. This was followed up by the most horrible and revolting mutilations, the more fanatical urging one another on. One of those who was thus dismembering the bodies, in a last excess of savage ferocity cut off a piece of flesh and boasted that he would eat it. The remains of their limbs were put up to auction. An eyewitness says, 'I bought one of John de Witt's fingers for two sous and a pot of beer.' 'They seemed,' he adds, 'like famished wolves, who, having found a corpse, were quarrelling over it to alleviate their voracious hunger.'

The burgher company had remained under arms to gloat over this hideous spectacle. Terror or hatred detained around the scaffold those who had been either the cowardly encouragers or the unabashed accomplices of these horrible insults. The magistrates of the Hague, who had been unable to reach the prison and protect the two brothers, had withdrawn to a neighbouring inn. Trembling and distracted, they showed themselves at the window as if to give their assent to the violence which was being committed under their eyes, while the principal enemies of the Grand Pensionary mingled with the crowd round the scaffold, thus satisfying their implacable resentment.

Rear-Admiral Cornelius Tromp, who had never forgiven John de Witt for the disgrace he had sustained in consequence of his misunderstanding with Ruyter, came to enjoy his base revenge. Wishing to remain concealed he had taken the precaution of pulling his hat over his eyes, but he was nevertheless recognised and pointed out by one of the assistants. Welcomed with enthusiasm by the crowd, he was asked, 'What does M. Tromp think of this death?' 'It had to be,' he replied with indifference.

One of the most fiery of the pastors at the Hague, Simon Simonides, whom the States had forbidden to preach on account of his seditious utterances, had not shrunk from encouraging the assassination by his presence. He was withdrawing in silence, when one of those who had assisted in

dragging the two corpses called out to him from the top of the scaffold, 'Are they properly hung, sir?' Observing that the head of the Grand Pensionary, who was taller than his brother, touched the platform of the scaffold, Simonides pointed to him, saying, 'Hang him up one rung higher.' The next day, Sunday, in his sermon at the New Church, he justified the crime, calling the assassins the new Maccabees who had bravely fought the unbelievers, and declaring that they merited a reward as having been the instruments of Divine vengeance.

Darkness alone separated the spectators, and the day had nearly ended in fresh acts of violence. The more unruly of the townspeople, over-excited by their libations, wished to pillage the Grand Pensionary's house, whilst the soldiers sent to guard it broke open the cellar and extracted the money, encouraged by their lieutenant, who seized and appropriated John de Witt's portrait.

Some of the members of the States, amongst others Van der Aa, the burgomaster of Rotterdam, would have had their throats cut had they not evaded by flight the fate which threatened them. It was only with great difficulty that the captains of the burgher companies got them back to their respective quarters. They withdrew with flags flying and in triumph as if returning from some great military exploit. 'It is nearly eight o'clock at night,' writes an eye-witness at the termination of the day, 'and there is great joy amongst the people as if a fair were going on.'

Towards half-past nine Verhoef reappeared on the scene in a last burst of fury. He wished to justify his crime by proving the guilt of his victims. With this view he attempted to create a belief in John de Witt's treason, and pretended to have discovered proof of it in a note addressed to Beverningh, which he found in the Grand Pensionary's clothes. This letter was merely a communication to Beverningh on the subject of the encampment of the troops at the head-quarters of Bodegrave, and on their proposed movements. Before taking it to the lawyer, Sterreweld, to get an authentic copy, he declared that a further punishment was deserved.

Returning to the scaffold with a knife in his hand, he disembowelled the bodies and took out the two hearts, which he intended, he said, to offer to the Prince of Orange and the King of England. He carried them away bleeding and put them on the inn table, where they became the sport of the assassins assembled there. Verhoef kept them a long time by him as trophies, and several years passed before they were buried. An hour later, in the darkness and solitude of the night, by the flickering light of torches, a painter approached the scaffold. It was John Baan, he who by a singular contrast had been commissioned five years before to paint the portrait of Cornelius de Witt in the height of his glory, on his return from his victorious expedition to England. He sketched the two bodies hanging on the gibbet, covered with wounds and torn in fragments, and thus preserved to posterity the ghastly picture of this scene of carnage.

Horrified at the catastrophe which their councillor deputies had permitted, the States of Holland assembled that evening. Only a very few of the members, about ten or twelve, answered to the summons, amongst whom was Vivien, who had courageously remained at his post. Utterly powerless, whilst the great minister who had so long had their confidence was, with his brother, being cruelly murdered, the States had not even interfered to enforce respect to the bodies of the victims, for which they could now only insure burial.

At seven o'clock in the evening they desired the councillor deputies to have them conveyed to a safe place. But the latter waited some hours longer before they executed this order. At midnight the two bodies were taken down from the scaffold by John de Witt's servant Van der Wissel and his coachman Jacob. A lawyer named Theophilus Neranus, and De Witt's shoemaker, Thomas Ryswyck, whose family John de Witt had assisted, courageously offered to assist them.

The brave sister of the two victims, Joanna de Zwyn-drecht, received the precious remains which were brought back to her, neither fear nor despair being capable of disturbing that strength of mind which she had in common with her brothers. When she withdrew to join John de Witt's

children, who had been left in her charge, her nephew Anthony de Veer, son of the old bailiff of the Hague, undertook the cares of burial. The letter which he wrote the next morning to his aunt, gives the minutest details of the funeral ceremony. Before morning, two men on horseback escorted the funeral car which contained the bodies of John and Cornelius de Witt to their last abode. They were buried in the New Church, near the pulpit, in the family vault which had been opened four years previously to receive the coffin of the Grand Pensionary's wife. Their arms had been secretly brought in, to be hung up according to custom over their tombs. The next day the populace of the Hague, having had notice of this, took possession of them, broke them in pieces, and were nearly violating the tombs.

Bernard Costerus, writing at the time, says, 'On Saturday, August 20, 1672, a tragedy was publicly enacted at the Hague as horrible as any that antiquity or a barbarous people could offer, in the assassination, and dismemberment of the bodies, of the brothers De Witt. I heard of it from my father, who had been sent on a mission to the Hague by the Town Council of Woerden, and who was a dismayed spectator of this horrible massacre. His hair stood on end whenever he thought of it.' 'The deaths of the Grand Pensionary and his brother are horrible,' wrote Huyghens, the great mathematician, who several years before had carried on a scientific correspondence with John de Witt. 'When one sees such things,' he added, 'it seems as if the Epicureans were not wrong in saying, *Versari in republica non est sapientis.*' The philosopher Spinoza, to whom the Grand Pensionary made an allowance of 200 florins, and who, to his honour, remained loyal to friendship and gratitude, writes to Leibnitz that his host at the Hague had prevented his going out for fear he should be torn in pieces; otherwise, he added, 'I should have gone that night to the scene of the massacre and posted up a paper with these words written on it, *Ultimi barbarorum.*'

These acts of violence committed by an unbridled mob could not but give some secret satisfaction to the enemy encamped on the invaded territory of the republic. They

flattered themselves that by means of them they could more easily achieve the conquest of the United Provinces, and the Commandant of Utrecht wrote at once to Louis XIV.'s ministers, 'that this affair, which had produced much consternation amongst all honest men, could not fail to have a good effect upon the King's service.' And when the catastrophe was described to the Prince of Condé as regrettable, it was entirely from a personal point of view, one of his financial agents mentioning it to him as a serious injury to his speculations in the Indies, 'as it would keep down the shares.' A singular way of looking upon so atrocious a crime; and what a lesson in philosophy may be derived from such a commentary on the most tragical of events!

Medals were struck in commemoration of the deed, and along with those engraved by the enemies of the victims, which represent them as having suffered the penalty of their power and of their pride, others, more or less tardily, did them the justice they deserved. Amongst the latter, the finest, which is of gold and has been preserved with the records of the family, bears in relief a bust of Cornelius de Witt, attired in uniform, in remembrance of his naval campaign, and that of John de Witt in his dress as minister of the States of Holland, with the double inscription, *Hic armis maximus ille toga*, and this line from Horace, *Integer vitæ scelerisque purus*. On the reverse appear the bodies of the two brothers being devoured by wild beasts; beneath them, with the date of the massacre, this Latin inscription, *Nobile par fratrum, sævo furor ore trucidat*, and below that again this funeral eulogy:

Nunc redeunt animis ingentia Consulibus acta,
Et formidati sceptris oracula Ministri.

Before the two victims were delivered up to their assassins, John de Witt's children—his three daughters and two sons—had been placed in safety by his servant and his clerk, according to the Grand Pensionary's last instructions to them when they left the prison. At about half-past two the orphans were taken to the sisters Deborah and Martha Coster, the family laundresses, who were aunts of Ounewaller. They spent the

night there in cruel anguish, the emotion of the Grand Pensionary's daughter being so great that a report spread of her death. The next day in the early morning, Joanna de Zwynrecht sent them in a carriage under the charge of the faithful Ounewaller to their maternal uncle, Peter de Graeff, at Ipendam near Amsterdam. Their father had in his will appointed him their guardian, in partnership with their other uncles, Gerard Bicker van Swieten and De Zwynrecht, and their cousin Vivien.

As to Jacob de Witt, who had remained at his son's house, whence he could hear the outcries of the murderers around the prison, he would willingly have awaited the assassins, but he was dragged away from the dwelling where the fury of the populace would probably not have spared him.

He resigned his post at the Audit Office and retired to weep over the deaths of those who had been the pride and joy of his old age, and having returned to Dordrecht, survived them to his sorrow for more than a year, dying January 10, 1674. 'You have no doubt heard,' writes Wicquefort to De Groot, 'that M. de Witt, senior, is dead, and that he has been buried at Dordrecht with much ceremony at midday, with bells tolling and followed by many people as well as by his grandsons.'

Cornelius de Witt's wife, who had been spared the harrowing sight so bravely borne by her sister-in-law Joanna de Zwynrecht, gave proof of similar strength of mind, and showed herself equally above all weakness. Eager to know her husband's fate, she left Dordrecht, where she had hitherto remained, to direct the inquiries the result of which were to be laid before the judges, and, accompanied by her eldest son Jacob, started for the Hague. Hearing at Delft of the sentence which restored Cornelius de Witt to liberty whilst banishing him, she was hastening the speed of her carriage that she might be the first to accompany him into exile, when, at Ryswick, an hour short of the Hague, she met a passer-by who informed her of the rising of the people and the massacre of the two brothers. He entreated her to retrace her steps, and having been unable to find a refuge with the pastor of the village, who like a coward refused her admittance, she

embarked for Rotterdam, where she passed the night with her sister-in-law, Maria Hoefft.

The next day, as she was returning to Dordrecht, she met on the boat a passenger just come from the Hague. He had been a witness of the scene, and gave an account of it to the bystanders, winding up by exhibiting a finger which had been cut from Cornelius de Witt's hand.

Maria, who had listened in silence, advanced towards him, and asked to look at the finger which he was showing. She examined it with reverent attention, and said suddenly, 'This finger was yesterday still on the hand of my beloved husband, I know it well.' At these words the passenger, who had not expected to find himself face to face with the victim's wife, fell down overwhelmed with emotion, and all who were with him on the boat were struck with pity, whilst Maria remained calm and collected in her sorrow.

She had already found a refuge against affliction in the Christian resignation whence she drew all her strength. The letter which she wrote from Rotterdam on the very evening of the fatal day to her sister-in-law, Joanna de Zwyndrecht, gives touching evidence of this. 'I cannot,' she writes to her, 'but wish you the consolation which has helped me, that it is God's pleasure that it should be so, and we must therefore bear the blow with submission. As regards my dear husband, I should wish that all might be done with the greatest simplicity and in silence, without hanging up his arms or making any display of mourning. May the Almighty God strengthen you with His Holy Spirit, to Whose keeping I commend you!'

To preserve to the family a record of the disaster in which all her happiness had foundered, she wrote the following lines in the private note-book in which Cornelius de Witt set down the events of his domestic life: 'This day, August 20, my dear husband was horribly murdered at the Hague by the burgher faction, with our worthy brother, John de Witt. He was in his fiftieth year, having been forty-nine years old on June 19, 1672. He had been taken on the last day of July to the "Conciergerie" of the Court of Justice, and from thence on August 6 to prison, there to be cruelly tortured on the sole

accusation of an infamous person, William Tichelaer, barber of Piershill. May God preserve all men from such misfortunes as those by which the 20th of this month has been so sorrowfully signalised.'

She retired after her widowhood to her mother's house at Rotterdam amidst the happy recollections of her life as a young girl, and survived her husband thirty-four years, having seen both her sons and two of her daughters die before her. Like Deborah, the heroine of the Old Testament, to whom she was compared in some lines addressed to her on her last birthday, she remained till the age of seventy-four, the guardian of the tombs of a family whose glory and misfortunes she had alike shared. Patriotic and religious feelings were a joint patrimony in this noble family. The victim's brother-in-law, Diederick Hoefft, wrote to their sister Joanna de Zwyndrecht, the day after their death, the following remarkable letter, in which the thought of public welfare softens the bitterness of private misfortune: 'What will become of us? Whatever wicked men may do, God's will must be accomplished; and if God wills that this event should contribute to re-establish concord in the country, the corpses of those for whom we weep will have helped towards the reconciliation.'

Three days after the assassination the States of Holland sent to the Grand Pensionary's house for the seal of the province, which had remained in his hands. Informed moreover by the councillor deputies that seals had been placed upon the cupboards and boxes containing his papers, they appointed commissioners to take possession of them. One of the nobles, Van Schaegen, Lord of Heenvliet, who had succeeded Cornelius de Witt as Ruard of Putten, and some of the deputies of Dordrecht, Amsterdam, and Alkmaar were charged with this mission. The States also sent the new Grand Pensionary Fagel, and their secretary, Simon van Beaumont, having decided that the councillor deputies should be commissioned to assist them.

The Grand Pensionary's papers included bundles of public and private letters written to him, and the minutes, bound in yearly numbers, of those which he wrote or caused to be

written for him. They form a series of volumes containing the history of his ministry and of his life.

The States resolved to have them taken to the Record Office, where this important collection has remained intact. They did not think it necessary, at any rate for the time being, to take any notice of the claims of the children's guardians, who demanded the custody of all the private letters, until they had made a preliminary investigation of John de Witt's correspondence, which resulted in his complete justification. The commissioners to whom the States entrusted this examination acknowledged his untiring industry, his punctilious regularity and his incorruptible fidelity. They declared that 'it was greatly to be desired that other magistrates should concern themselves as much about the welfare of their country as the Grand Pensionary seemed to have done.' Questioned as to what they had found in his papers, one of them made a reply which deserves to be recorded, anticipating as it did the judgment of history, 'Nothing but honour and virtue.'

The Prince of Orange had done nothing to hinder or to prevent the sanguinary drama which, as a contemporary writes, effectually prevented the hostile faction from doing him any harm. He appeared rather to encourage it and to give it his sanction. He had in fact, on June 21, 1672, received into his camp the first assassins whom John de Witt had escaped. A few weeks later he refused to intervene in favour of Cornelius de Witt when denounced by Tichelaer for an attempt on his life, although he could have had no doubt as to his innocence. He was absent from the Hague on the day on which the Grand Pensionary and his brother fell victims to the populace, but he had been there two days before.

On August 17, 1672, he entered the Assembly of the States-General to oppose the removal of Ruyter's fleet, which he wished to keep on the shores of Zealand, and he was still at the Hague on the 18th when he wrote to Prince John Maurice of Nassau, who was in command at Muiden, to ask him to meet him the following evening at his head-quarters at Alphen, where he was about to return. He did not, therefore, quit

the Hague without a knowledge of the sentence which condemned Cornelius de Witt to torture; and he coldly left the executioner to do his work, when he had but to say a word to stop it.

On August 20, the day of the massacre, he went at eight o'clock in the morning to Woerden, which had remained outside the lines of defence. He inspected the ramparts, but seemed to have no idea of fortifying the town. Bernard Costerus, who accompanied the Prince in this rapid tour, remarks that 'many reasonable and observant people at that time were disposed to think that, having been informed of what was passing at the Hague, he wished to establish an alibi.' 'According to them,' he adds, 'there being a direct and easy road to Woerden, with not more than ten leagues to traverse, the Prince could easily, after his early inspection, have been at the Hague by three o'clock in the afternoon.' It was further added that he had gone there incognito, and that the withdrawal of the cavalry, to whose care the brothers De Witt had been confided, had taken place at his orders, the command having been given by a noble who was known to be in his intimacy.

Gourville, on the other hand, relates 'that the Prince told him that upon hearing the noise of the excited populace, when M. John de Witt was on his way to the prison, some friends being with him he sent them to see what it was.' These testimonies are too untrustworthy to be of much value. They have not that appearance of authenticity or even of likelihood which could give them weight against the official reports on which reliance can be placed. 'At the time of the iniquitous death of M. de Witt,' said the Grand Pensionary Fagel in the Assembly of the States, a few days after the murder, 'it was stated the Prince was too kind-hearted, and that the work must therefore be done before he arrived at the Hague.' The best proof moreover that, instead of going to the Hague, William III. had returned from Woerden to his head-quarters, was that he himself there received, according to all appearances, the urgent message sent by the States of Holland at the first news of the beginning of the tumult.

However this may be, it is nevertheless averred, according to a record of the time, that the Prince of Orange secretly employed some tools of his own, amongst others the servants of his natural uncle, M. de Zuylesteyn, and other such scoundrels, who had done all in their power to augment the riot and let loose the popular fury, to insure the massacre of the brothers De Witt. He took no notice, moreover, of the appeal of the States of Holland, though he had but to go to the Hague, or even to send a messenger with an order of release, to save the lives of the two victims. He preferred to stand aloof, in which he was inexcusable. His conduct on that disastrous day, as well as during the weeks following it, might well give rise to suspicions, and in spite of the appearances which he kept up, it throws a dark shadow over the brightness of his renown.

As to his feelings, or what he allowed to be seen of them, on hearing of the deed, there are many contradictory reports. He was just sitting down to supper when he received a second message, dated seven o'clock in the evening, in which the States of Holland informed him with full details of the assassination of the Grand Pensionary and his brother, which they stigmatised as 'horrible,' demanding that it should be severely punished. It may be doubted, considering his usual reserve, whether the Prince ever said to De Gourville 'that he had given no orders that MM. de Witt should be killed, but that when he heard of their deaths, without having had a hand in it, he could not but feel somewhat relieved.' A witness who was with him when the message from the States arrived, M. de Benthem, seems worthy of more credit when some years later he writes, 'I never saw him so overcome as when he heard of the tragical end which by God's permission had come upon the two brothers who had always been opposed to him.' It was this communication made to John de Witt's son which induced him without scruple eleven years after his father's death to ask for an audience with the Prince of Orange. Samson, the historian who wrote the life of William III., also states that he expressed his regret for the fate of the two victims, 'allowing of no insults to the memory

of the Ruard, and declaring his belief that the Grand Pensionary's opposition to himself had arisen from no personal hatred.' He considered him, according to Burnet, 'one of the greatest men of his time, and recognised him as a faithful servant of the State.'

The Princess-Dowager of Orange on her side, speaking of the massacre of the two brothers, said, according to a statement made to Peter de Graeff, 'I do not much care about the Ruard, but I am much grieved for the Grand Pensionary, that so noble an intelligence should not have saved him from such a death.'

The Prince of Orange was, however, responsible, not only for the consideration he showed towards the murderers, but for the rewards he gave them. The moment he arrived at the Hague, on the evening of the day after the deed, the States sent commissioners to him to represent that they were at the mercy of the rioters and to beg him to protect them, by vigorous measures, against the ringleaders, who, according to a contemporary, were only ten or twelve in number. The Stadtholder answered them as usual in an evasive manner, alleging that there seemed to him too many culprits to be arrested, and that he did not think strong measures advisable.

This condonation by the Prince of Orange of riot and crime is thus estimated by a friend of the family in a letter of condolence written to Cornelius de Witt's brother-in-law, Anthony de Bercken: 'I fear to live under those who, having neither the power, the authority, nor the courage, to punish such crimes, leave a furious mob to perpetrate unheard-of atrocities. *Impunitas peccandi maxima est illecebra.*'

William III., not satisfied with showing this indulgence to the principal authors of this deed, did not shrink from becoming their benefactor. He publicly honoured with his confidence Albert Nierop, the judge who had been the most determined to destroy Cornelius de Witt, and who had even, it seems, given the signal for the rising of the populace and the massacre of the two brothers. Tichelaer, to whom a large

reward had been paid during his detention, received a pension of 400 florins, which was regularly paid, and even doubled, during the whole of William III.'s life. He moreover obtained the office of deputy-bailiff of Putten, which some say had been secretly promised to him by M. de Zuylesteyn when he made his first denunciation. Finally he obtained the annulling of the sentence of the Lower Courts convicting him of perjury and contempt of court, and the protection of the Stadtholder procured him a reversal of the sentence.

Others whose crimes were no less, shared the same favour. Borrebagh, one of Van der Graef's accomplices in the attempt at assassination which the Grand Pensionary had escaped, was reappointed Post-master. The sheriff, Van Bankhem, who had been amongst the foremost in helping the assassins on the terrible day of August 20, was made bailiff at the Hague, thus becoming the First Magistrate of the town in which the States held their sittings, as if publicly to insult them; and scarcely had he entered upon his office, than he took advantage of it to remunerate his accomplices. Two years later, when he had been prohibited from taking the sacrament on account of the scandal of his conduct, the Court of Justice demanded his dismissal, but William III. intervened to avert a condemnation which he said ought to be spared to one of the most faithful adherents of his House. Verhoef alone, by his subsequent excesses, prevented his protectors from giving him any proof of their good-will. Vainly recommended by Rear-Admiral Tromp, who had the audacity to ask Prince John Maurice of Nassau to employ him as head of the volunteers, he had to submit at last to the sentence of imprisonment for life, which was pronounced against him after he had for five years defied justice and braved all reprimands.

This impunity and glorification of crime only encouraged the persecutions which were carried on against all whom suspicion pointed at, either from their relationship to the victims or from similar political opinions imputed to them. One of John de Witt's nearest relations, Ascanius van Sypesteyn, chief of the military train, was assassinated whilst with the

army, without his murderers being discovered. Another of the Grand Pensionary's cousins, Focanus, bailiff of Bois-le-Duc, being denounced by his coachman as having planned an attempt against the life of the Prince of Orange, was very nearly being condemned; but, more fortunate than Cornelius de Witt, he escaped by the too manifest contradictions of his accuser. Peter Delacourt also, the chief publicist of the republican party, was very nearly paying with his life for his opposition to the promotion of the Prince of Orange. He was obliged to seek refuge at Antwerp, where he found De Groot, who had escaped by flight from a similar vengeance. The lawyer, Theophilus Neranus, who had so courageously aided John de Witt's servant to render the last honours to the two victims, was accused of distributing a pamphlet against the assassins, entitled, 'Dutch Venison, cooked by England, and cut up at the Hague,' and summoned before the Court; whilst his brother Issac, who had printed it, was arbitrarily imprisoned in the Town Hall at Rotterdam.

Ruyter himself was not secure against the fury of popular feeling, either by the greatness of his renown or by the services he had just rendered to the republic, in saving the United Provinces through the instrumentality of the fleet. The loyal attachment he had never ceased to show towards the Grand Pensionary de Witt and his brother made him a mark for the hatred of the mob, who represented him as an enemy to the Orange party. Assailed by a body of rioters, his house was only saved from pillage thanks to the firmness of a burgher captain and the assistance of a company of the burghers of Amsterdam, whose conduct was a reproach to those at the Hague.

Either purposely or from carelessness, the safe-conduct sent him by William III. was only given to him, some weeks later, when all danger was over. He was, however, exposed to an attempt against his life in the following month, after his return from the fleet, and only escaped by the courageous interposition of his servant. 'How I pity our country and the honest men who are still in it,' wrote De Groot the following year, 'for having been exposed to the most degrading servitude, without

the power of appeasing the hatred of their enemies, or the rage and fury of their fellow-citizens.'

At the instigation of the Stadtholder, the States of Holland resigned themselves to the humiliation of an amnesty, but as they only granted it with a threat of exercising the greatest severity in the future, the Prince of Orange persuaded them not to publish it until weariness of disorder had re-established public peace and made all repression useless.

The violence of the reaction which everywhere threatened the magistrates of the towns who had remained in office could not but profit William III. The bodies of John and Cornelius de Witt, thrown as it were at his feet, served as a blood-stained pedestal to the power which he was eager to grasp. The very day of his arrival at the Hague after their assassination, he represented to the Commissioners of the States of Holland that if he might advise the magistrates of the town, he should recommend them to resign, adding, however, that he had no doubt of their innocence. At the same time he arrogated to himself an authority with which he had not been invested, by confirming the election of the new magistrates of Rotterdam, whom the rioters had already placed in possession.

Three days later the States of Holland, anxious to close their session, and fearing that their absence would leave their councillor deputies powerless, gave the Prince of Orange the right to change at his pleasure the magistrates of the towns, by whom they themselves were elected, thus accomplishing the great sacrifice demanded of them. They only sought to mitigate it by limiting so tremendous a power in the hands of their Stadtholder to 'this once, without binding themselves in the future.' This resolution, made after a debate prolonged through two sittings, empowered him to ask, and in case of need to insist upon, the resignation of any magistrates whose removal seemed to him advantageous to the public welfare. The latter were to be relieved of their functions with the understanding that their removal in no way injured their good name, and only placed their persons and property under the Prince's protection. To avoid the appearance of thus violating the

sovereign prerogatives of the town councils, they were allowed, during a week's delay, the imaginary right of signifying their refusal to consent to a dispossession to which they were obliged to submit. When once they had consented to this abdication, the States of Holland completed their subjection by leaving to the Prince of Orange the free disposal of all vacant military posts below the rank of colonel, so that with the exception of the higher commands, of which the States-General were not deprived, he was thus recognised as the sole head of the army. 'Very soon,' writes Bernard to Louvois, 'the whole government will belong to him, and he will have more power than his ancestors ever had.'

William III. found a most useful ally in John de Witt's successor, Gaspard Fagel. Assisted by his brother, Henry Fagel, who replaced him as Secretary to the States-General, the new Grand Pensionary of Holland placed all his authority at the service of the Prince of Orange, and had no other ambition than that of pleasing him by the services he rendered to him. It was Fagel's unjust appeals and insinuating speeches that obtained from the States of the Provinces those last concessions which so amply satisfied William III.'s claims and demands.

Not only in Holland, but in Zealand also, the Prince of Orange summoned new magistrates to the municipal assemblies, either to appease violent passions or to content the lowest ambitions, 'at the risk,' writes De Groot, 'of seeing the town councils governed by the mob.' Most of those whose talents or whose services should have marked them out for public recognition, amongst others Vivien, Beverningh, Henry Hooft the courageous burgomaster of Amsterdam, and later Van Beuningen himself, sacrificed to ingratitude, had to wait in retirement, more or less prolonged, for the termination of their disgrace. The new Stadtholder's courtiers, such as Valkenier of Amsterdam, or former conspirators like Kievit of Rotterdam who had been convicted of treason during the last war but one with England, and reinstated by the Prince's order, were called to fill the office of pensionaries in the principal towns. Formerly masters of the government of the republic, the

States of Holland found themselves henceforth in a state of dependence from which they could not free themselves, and their power seemed to disappear with the great minister who had prolonged for their benefit the interregnum of the House of Orange.

It was for William III. henceforth to justify the revolution which restored to him the inheritance of his ancestors, by accomplishing the work of deliverance for which he had been elected by a whole nation threatened with conquest. He devoted his life to this noble task, though powerless at first to give his country either victory or peace, but he did not allow himself to be discouraged by the failure of his first attempts. When, at the end of the year, instead of maintaining a defensive war he attempted to force the French army to abandon its conquests by attacking it in the Netherlands, he very nearly left the enemy master of Holland.

Short as the country was of troops, the frosts of winter would have given her over to the invaders but for a sudden thaw which hastened the retreat of the Duke of Luxembourg and nearly turned it into a rout. The Prince of Orange had to wait another year before his military manœuvres and diplomatic negotiations had restored to the republic the three provinces of which the invasion had deprived her. By thus braving misfortune, William III. paved the way to the great destiny which awaited him. Sixteen years later the King of England's successor James II., having married his daughter to the Prince of Orange, was to be ousted from his throne by his son-in-law, to whom the English appealed to break the alliance between the Stuarts and France.

This revolution opposed to Louis XIV. the henceforth indissoluble union between Holland and England which, by giving the signal for a European coalition, brought upon France, invaded in her turn, the sad end of a great reign. The retaliation for the war so unjustly declared against the United Provinces was long in coming, but it was dearly bought by those who had provoked it. It was the Prince of Orange who profited by it. Not only did it bring about the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership in his favour, and subsequently his

elevation to the throne of Great Britain, but he gained, with the possession of a kingdom, the glory of playing a great part as the liberator of his country and the defender of the independence of Europe. As to the republic of the United Provinces, William III.'s greatness was her loss. She found herself involved in the obstinate struggle in which he engaged with Louis XIV. to check the power of the great King. Even when freed from invasion she had no further repose; and to the end of the century, and even beyond it, the peace which was so essential to her was only restored by truces. All her interests were sacrificed to a continuation of the continental war, she lost her dominion over the seas, the prosperity of her finance and commerce was irreparably injured, and she found herself condemned to play a part which being beyond her strength must in the end exhaust her. She could no longer hold her own.

Her political freedom, though only temporarily eclipsed, had a long trial of thirty years to pass through. In fact, whilst the States-General recognised the office of captain-and admiral-general as hereditary to the Prince of Orange and his descendants, the States of Holland and Zealand, taking the initiative, declared their Stadtholder's power to be hereditary. Their example, to which the States of Utrecht hastened to conform, was followed by the provinces of Guelders and Overijssel as soon as, once freed from the French invasion, they were restored to the Confederation. The provinces of Friesland and Groningen, still governed by the young Prince of Nassau, Henry Casimir, who was destined to be the ancestor of the dynasty now reigning in the Netherlands, alone remained in possession of their former privileges during the minority of their Stadtholder, but testified the most humble deference for all William III.'s wishes. 'The Majesty of Orange was offended,' wrote a great lawyer some years afterwards, 'at the mere idea of the State having any impulse but what he was pleased to give it.'

In making the Grand Pensionary de Witt a scapegoat for her disasters, the republic of the United Provinces deprived themselves of a great minister who, instead of making her

dependent, only desired to serve her. Reduced to the last extremity, she found in William III. a liberator but also a master, who by imposing upon her the authority of a sovereign made her, in a measure, pay a ransom for her freedom.

The supreme powers of the States-General and the States of the Provinces, especially those of Holland, however, still existed, if only nominally. The United Provinces remained a republic in spite of the ratification of the inheritance of the offices in favour of the Prince of Orange, and when, some years later, the States of Guelders offered him the sovereignty of their province, he was almost forced to refuse it in spite of his secret vexation. Political freedom had taken such firm root during the vacancy of the Stadtholdership, that it maintained its hold even upon those who would have wished to put it down. When dying, moreover, without leaving an heir to replace him, William III. restored to the United Provinces their freedom of government, of which they eagerly availed themselves.

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